United Nations S/PV.8389

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8389th meeting
Monday, 5 November 2018, 10 a.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu	(China)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Albanai
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Orrenius Skau
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

The situation in Libya

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18-36065 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Libya

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of Libya to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2018/985, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:
Bolivia (Plurinational State of), Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, France, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

Against:
None

Abstaining:
China, Russian Federation

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The draft resolution received 13 votes in favour, none against and 2 abstentions. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 2441 (2018).

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements after the vote.

Mr. Hickey (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the Security Council's agreement to renew the Libya sanctions regime. In particular, we welcome the fact that the Council has taken an important step by expanding the designation criteria to include gender-based violence. This sends a powerful signal that the international community will not tolerate such crimes. Sanctions remain an important tool for the Council in our work to support the Government of National Accord and to stabilize Libya. However, they can be only one part of the solution, which requires full political reconciliation.

We reiterate our support to the Presidency Council and the Government of National Accord, headed by Prime Minister Serraj, as the legitimate executive authorities under the Libyan Political Agreement. The Council needs to be ready to take swift action against spoilers who continue to obstruct peace, security and stability in Libya. We welcome the tireless efforts of Special Representative of the Secretary-General Ghassan Salamé and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya to reach an inclusive political settlement within the framework of the Libyan Political Agreement, and we look forward to the Special Representative's briefing to the Council on Wednesday.

Mr. Orrenius Skau (Sweden): We welcome the adoption of resolution 2441 (2018), reaffirming the Council's sanctions measures against Libya, and we would like to thank the United Kingdom for the transparent and inclusive negotiation process.

Sweden, together with the Netherlands and with the strong support of partners, is particularly pleased to have introduced the act of planning, directing or committing sexual and gender-based violence as a separate and distinct criterion for listing under the sanctions. Unfortunately, this is particularly relevant in the Libyan context. As reported by the Secretary-General, his Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict and the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), among others, conflict-related sexual violence and sexual violence in detention centres are an acute problem in Libya. It is our sincere hope that the highlighting of this problem can make a decisive change, compel compliance and trigger accountability on the ground in Libya.

On the horizontal level, we hope that the Council will continue to expand its sanctions listing criteria in other sanctions regimes, when relevant, and counter the myth that sexual violence is an inevitable part of conflict. We further welcome the Council's recognition of the need for sexual and gender-based violence expertise among the Panel of Experts, which will give the Committee and the Council the further understanding they need to address this serious problem.

Together with the United Nations Support Mission in Libya, the referral of the situation in Libya to the International Criminal Court and the measures to prevent migrant smuggling through Libya, the sanctions play an integral part in the Security Council's broader measures to support Libya in building long-term peace and stability. The Libya Sanctions Committee recently finished its first-ever mission to the country and through its Swedish Chair will provide its first impressions from the trip later this week.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We were unable to support resolution 2441 (2018), drafted by the United Kingdom. No account was taken of our principled and duly justified comments. The authors incorporated into the resolution a provision specifying sexual and gender-based violence as a separate criterion for sanctions, although such actions are fully covered in the existing listing criteria. The existence of precedents in the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) and recently extended pursuant to resolution 2399 (2018) concerning the Central African Republic, as well as in the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2206 (2015) concerning South Sudan, does not mean that the practice should automatically apply to all country situations, each of which is unique. Any unjustified appearance of a gender component in the work of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011) concerning Libya will distract the experts from their main tasks.

The resolution is adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, based on which the Security Council identifies the presence of threats to international peace and security and adopts decisions on measures to be taken. That is the Council's core prerogative. The issue of sexual and gender-based violence is considered by specialized bodies, such as the Human Rights Council and the Commission on the Status of Women. The appropriate division of labour must be adhered to. If not, the Security Council will find itself chasing after violators and trying to reason with domestic tyrants rather than resolving conflicts.

Sexual and gender-based violence is part of the general level of criminality in any country. For example, open-source data shows that there has been a steady rise in instances of sexual violence in Sweden, while in the Netherlands the indicator for violence against women is among the highest in the European Union. Combating this kind of crime falls first and foremost within the remit of national Governments. Measures taken by the international community must be auxiliary in nature.

We get the impression that the countries that are pushing this issue on the Council's agenda are trying to make domestic political capital out of the imposition of sanctions regimes on other States. It has occurred to no one to consider whether Security Council sanctions on specific individuals for sexual violence in Libya will actually help prevent such crimes there. That approach is populism reduced to its essence. The facts of these kinds of crimes committed against migrants in Libya only confirm our view that the most effective way to combat them is to eradicate the criminal networks involved. Everything, including the information from the Panel of Experts, indicates that the tracks lead to the migrants' countries of destination and Europe most of all. Yet we have seen no desire on the part of the European countries to impose Security Council sanctions on their own criminal authorities.

Very recently, when the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara was being extended (see S/PV.8387), we spoke about the abuse of their powers by some penholders for particular issues on the Security Council's agenda. Today's case also attests to the resolution's authors' unconstructive methods, in which no effort is made to adopt documents by consensus. The penholdership mechanism needs major change.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): Today's vote to renew the mandate authorizing Security Council sanctions on illicit petroleum exports from Libya and asset freezes and travel bans on Libyan political spoilers should have been unanimous. It should have sent a clear message to the Libyan people that we are united behind them and that we on the Security Council will hold Libyan spoilers to account for their actions.

The Security Council unanimously agreed to list six migrant smugglers earlier this year for their abuses in Libya, marking the very first time that we have ever used sanctions to respond to migrant trafficking. These criminal gangs cannot operate with impunity, and we remain deeply concerned about the welfare of the migrants they seek to exploit. We also unanimously agreed in September to list Libyan militia leader Ibrahim Jadhran for attacking Libya's oil facilities earlier this summer. That should be a warning to others who may try to seize Libya's resources for themselves, and this

mandate clearly authorizes the Security Council to act in the future.

One key factor that has not changed in Libya is the potential of the Libyan people and their desire to create a better country for themselves. The Security Council must continue to do its part.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): As this is my first public meeting here this month, please allow me to honour your presidency, Sir, by trying to say this in Chinese.

(*spoke in Chinese*)

Thank you, Mr. President.

(*spoke in English*)

First of all, let me take this opportunity to thank the United Kingdom for its diligent efforts in coordinating the drafting of resolution 2441 (2018). In our opinion, the Libya sanctions regime is a crucial element of the Council's efforts to support peace and stability in Libya. We welcome the fact that today's resolution extends the regime, including the mandate of the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 1970 (2011), by another 15 months. We welcome in particular the addition of a new sanctions criterion for sexual and gender-based violence, pursuant to a proposal made by Sweden and us. Sexual and gender-based violence, particularly against migrants, constitutes an increasingly worrying problem in Libya that requires a strong response. The issue of sexual violence in Libya is directly connected to the issues of peace and security in Libya that we are discussing here today. The addition of this designation criterion is an important step towards addressing the issue. The need for it was also underlined by many during the Arria Formula meeting on the issue on 22 October, not only in regard to Libya but across the Council's sanctions regimes and beyond.

This year the Committee put sanctions in place against seven specific individuals. Six of them concern the first-ever sanctions on human traffickers. They were proposed by the Kingdom of the Netherlands and partners inside and outside the Council. Ensuring the implementation of these and all sanctions is key. We therefore draw the attention of all Member States to the Council's call in this resolution to implement the travel ban and the assets-freeze measures against those individuals and to report to the Committee on the steps they have taken.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of France, I would first like to express to the Chinese presidency of the Security Council our warmest wishes for success this month.

France supported the renewal of the sanctions regime against Libya for an additional 15 months and welcomes the adoption of resolution 2441 (2018). It is critical to maintain a constructive dynamic within the Council on this issue that will enable us to develop a positive vision of the stages to come and to help ensure overall stability in Libya in a context in Tripoli that is extremely fragile, as we have seen this month.

Although the text of the renewal is essentially technical, it includes certain welcome additions that strengthen the sanctions regime, specifically the introduction of sexual and gender-based violence as a designation criterion for sanctions. That is an important step forward in the Libyan context, and its proper implementation must be achieved.

The text maintains and strengthens the mechanisms in force with regard to the illicit export of all types of petroleum products. It reaffirms that Libya's oil resources must remain under the exclusive control of the Government of National Accord and the Tripoli-based National Oil Corporation for the benefit of all Libyans. The resolution also helps to safeguard the arms embargo provision, which is critical. In the light of the ongoing instability, building a unified national security architecture, under the control of the civilian authority, is a top priority.

Lastly, the text reaffirms the Council's support for the Government of National Accord and the urgent need to arrive at a political solution. It is critical to persevere in our initiatives along two lines — on the one hand, combating all those who jeopardize the tenuous political balance and exploit the situation to divert Libyan economic resources, which must remain a priority for us; on the other hand, fully supporting the efforts of the United Nations Support Mission in Libya and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Libya to advance the democratic transition in Libya. Libyan stakeholders must work on this together with Special Representative Ghassan Salamé, whose initiatives we fully support, without extending the deadlines.

Respect for the commitments undertaken in Paris is essential to move beyond the status quo, which only prolongs the instability. It is more important than ever

before for the Council to remain united and mobilized around these shared goals, and the Council can count on France's commitment to that end.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is generally opposed to sanctions when they do not have a clearl and well-defined goal to improve or help to resolve the prevailing situation in the affected country or region. In the case at hand, bearing in mind not only the atrocious effects of the criminality in Libya, but also the fact that all of this is impacting West Africa and Central Africa, we believe that these sanctions could help to attenuate these effects.

On the other hand, we tend to forget the fact that it is women who most suffer in situations like that prevailing in Libya, characterized by human trafficking, sexual violence, the abuse of immigrants, illegal arms trafficking and the illicit trade of crude oil on the black market, all of which simply prolongs the suffering and need of the Libyan people. We believe and hope that the renewal of the sanctions through resolution 2441 (2018), which we have just adopted, will contribute, as I said, to pacifying the situation in that brotherly country of North Africa, Libya.

The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8390

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Monday, 5 November 2018, 10.25 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu	(China)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Adom
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Delattre
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Orrenius Skau
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 29 October 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/917)

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18-36101 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in the Middle East

Letter dated 29 October 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/971)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/971, which contains the text of a letter dated 29 October 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council.

I now give the floor to Ms. Nakamitsu.

Ms. Nakamitsu: I thank the members of the Security Council for this opportunity to brief the Council again on the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013), on the elimination of the chemical weapons programme of the Syrian Arab Republic.

The Office for Disarmament Affairs has been in regular contact with the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on this matter. I spoke to the OPCW Director-General this past Thursday, 1 November, and look forward to seeing him in two weeks, when I travel to The Hague to deliver a message on behalf of the Secretary-General at the opening of the Review Conference of the Chemical Weapons Convention.

There have been some new developments related to this file in the past month; in other areas there has been little change. Efforts to clarify the outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic remain as I previously informed. Following the analysis by the OPCW of the information provided to it by Syria on 10 July, the Director-General wrote a letter to the Syrian Deputy Foreign Minister, dated 28 September, which reiterated the need to resolve the outstanding issues and invited Syria to continue working to clarify the remaining gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies. That message was underlined at working-level meetings that took place between the OPCW and the Syrian National Authority.

In that context, I welcome the Director-General's news that the inspections at the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities are now under way. The conduct of the inspections is in accordance with the decision of the OPCW Executive Council taken at its eighty-third session, which required the OPCW to carry out two yearly inspections of those sites.

With regard to the OPCW Fact-finding Mission (FFM) in the Syrian Arab Republic and its work in relation to the alleged use of chemical weapons in Douma, the Director-General informed me that the FFM is close to drawing its conclusions and will be issuing the report in due course. Like the Council, I look forward to receiving the final report on that incident.

The FFM is also investigating five additional reported incidents brought to the attention of the Director-General by the National Authority of the Syrian Arab Republic: two incidents in Kharbit Masasnah on 7 July 2017 and 4 August 2017; one incident in Al-Salamiyah on 9 August 2017; one incident in Yarmouk, Damascus, on 22 October 2017; and one in Souran on 8 November 2017. So far there is no indication of when a report on those incidents is likely to be issued.

At its fourth special session, in June, the Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention decided, among other things, that the OPCW Secretariat

> "shall put in place arrangements to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic ... in those instances in which the OPCW Fact-finding Mission in Syria determines or has determined that use or likely use occurred, and cases for which the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism has not issued a report".

The OPCW Director-General has now provided two progress reports in that regard to the OPCW's Executive Council and to the Secretary-General. He continues to make progress in implementing his mandate.

Although five years have now passed since the adoption of resolution 2118 (2013), there is still work to be done before it can be considered to have been fully implemented. Moreover, as long as the use of chemical weapons is ongoing or the threat of their use lingers, we must retain our focus on the issue and not allow ourselves to become inured to it. We will need unity in the Security Council if we are to collectively re-establish the norm against chemical weapons. The vitality and credibility of the broader disarmament and non-proliferation architecture depend on it. The use of these weapons must always be seen as a violation of a deeply held taboo. It is therefore imperative to identify those responsible and hold them accountable.

In a related matter, and before concluding, I want to note that allegations of a possible planned use of chemical weapons in Idlib continue to surface. The Secretary-General has made clear his concern about the continued use of chemical weapons, as well as the risks of a humanitarian catastrophe in the event of a full-scale military operation in Idlib province. He has called on all parties to exercise restraint. I want to once again underscore the vital importance of upholding humanitarian principles and the Chemical Weapons Convention in Syria.

The President: I thank Mrs. Nakamitsu for her briefing.

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I thank Under-Secretary-General Nakamitsu for her briefing.

The United States is pleased that the agreement to establish a demilitarized zone in and around Idlib continues to hold. We again note that any military offensive in Idlib would be a reckless escalation that would bring further instability.

The United States is standing with Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura to support his effort to make progress towards a durable political solution as the best chance of forestalling additional episodes in which the Al-Assad regime might again consider using chemical weapons. The Al-Assad regime's use of chemical weapons, independently confirmed by the Independent International Commission of Inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, is a clear demonstration of why the United Nations-led political process must move, make progress and succeed without further delay. The regime used deadly chemical weapons on its own people. There must be accountability for that, and there must be a political transition, in accordance with resolution 2254 (2015), that ensures justice and prevents anyone, particularly the Al-Assad regime, from using chemical weapons again.

There must be an end to the provocations and disinformation from the Al-Assad regime and Russia, including their continued attempts to falsely accuse humanitarian first responders and heroes — the White Helmets — of planning chemical-weapon attacks in Idlib or elsewhere. This is especially ridiculous considering that independent mechanisms created by this very Council have found the Syrian regime to be the party responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria.

The United States once again expresses its strong support for the Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) in its work of investigating allegations of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. We strongly support the implementation of the OPCW's attribution arrangements for cases where the Fact-finding Mission has determined that use or likely use has occurred. Attribution for the use of chemical weapons in Syria is one of the steps necessary for accountability and preventing future use. The United States continues to hope that the Council will unite around the notion, which was thought to have been well established and accepted for 100 years, that chemical weapons have no place in our world. All of us, and particularly the Syrian people, deserve to live without fear of those horrific weapons.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank Mrs. Nakamitsu for her briefing.

For a long time now, some Western States have made Syria's so-called chemical dossier, which the Security Council considers every month, into a tool for putting pressure on the authorities in Damascus — a tool that destroys the foundations of international cooperation in the area of the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

Syria's chemical-weapon stockpiles were removed and eliminated under the supervision of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). The former military-chemical programme's facilities have

been destroyed. Inspections of the scientific research centre have revealed no undeclared activities, and after the missile strikes on the installations by the United States and its allies any inspection activities would be pointless.

The subject of Syria's initial declaration under the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has become particularly ritualized. For all these years, the Syrian Government has conscientiously cooperated with the OPCW Technical Secretariat. It has provided all the information it possesses, but the number of so-called unresolved issues is only increasing. Damascus has reached a point where it has no more data. Any possibility of shedding light on a host of issues has gone, but they have been artificially kept on the agenda.

The investigations conducted by the former OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism (JIM) have gone down in history as blatantly unprofessional and outrageously politicized. They were artificially directed at one goal, tarnishing the international reputation of the Syrian authorities. Our attempts to bring the JIM's work into alignment with CWC standards were firmly blocked. The logical outcome of those manipulations was the closure of the Mechanism. I should add that we have yet to hear a reasonable explanation from the Secretariat about how effectively the principles of the confidentiality and inviolability of the former JIM's archives are being ensured, as established in the scope of its authority. We have had information that there have been unacceptable leaks of sensitive data, which must stop immediately.

So far we have not been able to change the parameters of the operations of the OPCW Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic, which prefers to work remotely and base its research on dubious sources that are known to be hostile to the Syrian authorities. Attempts to reform the Mission in accordance with the provisions of the CWC have been met with stiff resistance from those whom this state of affairs suits.

Meanwhile, Damascus's opponents continue to design new structures, needless to say according to their own rules, as a result of which the OPCW has lately been literally bursting at the seams. In June, a decision by an absolute minority vote of the States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention was pushed through assigning to the organization in The Hague the job of determining those responsible for the use of chemical weapons. The decision is illegitimate, because it contradicts the letter and spirit of the CWC and would require substantial amendments to the text of the Convention that would require the consent of all member States. Besides that, it is a blatant infringement on the Security Council's exclusive prerogatives.

The people behind that initiative are now attempting to extract budget funds for implementing the attribution resolution and tailoring the OPCW's programme of work for the coming year accordingly. That is being done with violations of the rules of procedure and severe pressure being put on the parties to the CWC. The OPCW, which began as an effective mechanism for international control in the area of chemical disarmament, is losing its authority and becoming an instrument for putting political pressure on undesirable countries.

Against that backdrop, we continue to receive alarming information that terrorist groups in Syria are pursuing their preparations for large-scale provocations through the use of toxic substances, in cooperation with the White Helmets. Our Syrian colleagues regularly bring indications of this to the Council's attention and the Russian military also has information on it. For example, we know that on 27 October, militias from the Turkistan Islamic Party in Syria transferred 20 decalitre containers of chlorine from Maarrat Al-Nu'man. Local residents reported to the Russian Centre for the Reconciliation of Opposing Sides in the Syrian Arab Republic that White Helmet activists were looking for people willing to take part in filming staged video footage in exchange for food. We have received similar information from Aleppo province, where the White Helmets brought canisters of toxic substances and professional video-recording equipment to the towns of Azaz, Marea and Al-Rai. Those provocations are clearly designed to pin a label on the violator of the non-proliferation regime in Syria, create a reason for renewed acts of aggression against Damascus and hold Russia up to shame as an alleged enabler of the "heinous crimes of the regime". Our military experts are monitoring the situation. We have radiation, chemical and biological reconnaissance vehicles deployed at posts in the immediate vicinity of the demilitarized zone in Idlib province that will help us analyse the situation.

The negative side of the politicization of the topic of Syria's former chemical warfare programme is the lack of an adequate response to the genuine threat of chemical terrorism in Syria and the Middle East. The initiatives that Russia has launched in that regard are

being deliberately obstructed. However, we hope that life will compel an end to such unconstructive approaches.

Mr. Delattre (France) (*spoke in French*): I would like to thank the Chinese presidency for convening this meeting, as well as Under-Secretary-General Izumi Nakamitsu for her very informative briefing. Today I will discuss three points — the situation on the ground, the importance of remaining mobilized in the face of the re-emergence of chemical weapons and the problem of Syrian chemical weapons in particular.

On the ground, our priority is maintaining a long-term ceasefire in Idlib. The Istanbul summit on 27 October resulted in a clear commitment by the four participants to support the sustainable implementation of the ceasefire in Idlib. The idea is removing for the long term the threat of a major offensive that would have disastrous humanitarian, migratory and security consequences. The summit's road map is therefore clear and we will continue to support the ongoing efforts to stabilize the situation and enable Turkey to separate terrorists from other groups. We must also do everything we can to ensure the protection of civilians, including humanitarian and medical personnel, as well as to ensure comprehensive, safe and unimpeded humanitarian access throughout Syria by the most direct routes and in the most effective way.

The Istanbul communiqué also outlines our collective demand that any use of chemical weapons be banned. To cite its very clear message, the summit's participants

(*spoke in English*)

> "[r]eaffirmed their strongest opposition to the use of chemical weapons by any party in Syria and called for strict compliance by all parties with the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction".

(*spoke in French*)

While the regime has continued its deceitful propaganda campaign of blaming others for the chemical attacks, I should emphasize the importance of maintaining our extreme vigilance with regard to the use of chemical weapons in Syria. Any resort to such weapons will not go unanswered.

As President Macron hosts a ceremony in France a few days from now marking the 100th anniversary of the armistice of 11 November 1918, we must be able to assume our collective responsibility to history by ensuring that the barbaric use of chemical weapons that occurred during the First World War, so deeply etched in our collective memory, is never repeated. In view of the re-emergence of chemical weapons in Syria and elsewhere, a united and mobilized Security Council is therefore an absolute necessity. The decision of the States parties to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), adopted in June in accordance with the rules of the Organization, has enabled the international community to strengthen its capabilities, providing it with improved tools for deterring the use of chemical weapons and in particular aimed at designating its perpetrators more effectively. It is now necessary to translate that decision into the Organization's means, especially with regard to the upcoming deadlines this month in The Hague.

We should make it clear that failing to invest in strengthening the existing institutions would jeopardize the non-proliferation regime, which is at the heart of our collective security, and at a time when that regime, with its highly developed chemical-weapon component, is being put to the test. That is a scenario that we cannot allow to happen. In particular, we call on everyone to support all investigative mechanisms established in The Hague, Geneva and New York in the difficult task that lies ahead. That is the goal of the initiatives that we have put forward, from the partnership in the fight against impunity for the use of chemical weapons to the establishment of a European Union sanctions regime. For that reason, we also support strengthening the OPCW's verification and inspection capabilities.

My third point is that strengthening those verification measures is all the more necessary in view of the continuing uncertain state of Syrian stockpiles. The continued use of chemical weapons in Syria confirms the existence of chlorine and sarin stockpiles, and yet there there has been little progress for months on Syria's initial declaration of its stocks in 2013, which is still full of inconsistencies. That à la carte approach by the Syrian regime is not acceptable and demands our collective vigilance. It is essential that the regime's supporters get it to cooperate fully.

In conclusion, with regard to the broader Syrian conflict, the threat of the use of chemical weapons and the country's instability will not end as long as the regime refuses to engage with Staffan de Mistura's political process, whose framework was established in

resolution 2254 (2015). The Istanbul communiqué also establishes a clear goal with regard to that, a meeting of a constitutional committee by the end of the year. Together with the members of the small group on Syria, France will spare no effort in that regard. The United Nations has established a third list, which it has reviewed in dialogue with all stakeholders on several occasions. All conditions have been met so that the United Nations can convene a constitutional committee and finally implement the entirety of resolution 2254 (2015), which serves as our common guiding light now more than ever, in particular with regard to the holding of free and fair elections under the supervision of the United Nations in a safe and neutral environment. That is the only way to reach a lasting solution to the conflict.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, we would like to thank Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her briefing today and for submitting the sixty-first monthly report of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to the security Council pursuant to resolution 2118 (2013).

As we begin the month of November, allow me to start by reminding the Security Council that this month last year the Council had the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism at its disposal, which was able to identify in a professional, objective and independent manner those who used chemical weapons in Syria. For some time, the Syrian chemical dossier counted as one of the Security Council's most prominent successes. Through its unity, the Council was able to underline the international community's determination and resolve to ensure the non-recurrence of chemical-weapon crimes and ensure accountability. One year after the end of the Mechanism's mandate, we find ourselves unable to agree on a new mechanism and compelled to resort to means outside the purview of the Security Council so as to administer justice and ensure accountability relating to chemical-weapons crimes.

The State of Kuwait therefore supported the French initiative to ensure accountability for those who used chemical weapons and supported numerous countries to hold a special session of the Conference of the States Parties to the OPCW on 26 and 27 June in The Hague. The Conference sought to identify parties responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria through the OPCW. That was a very important step supported by the State of Kuwait. We look forward to seeing the OPCW adopt the necessary measures to shoulder that responsibility. At the same time, we stress that the Security Council must shoulder its responsibilities under the Charter of the United Nations to counter all threats to international peace and security, including crimes involving chemical weapons.

Once again, we restate our readiness to work with all members of the Security Council to reach an agreement on establishing a new mechanism to shoulder our common responsibilities. We call again for the need for Council's members to speak as one voice on this issue, which involves is the crime of using those prohibited weapons. We reiterate that the lack of a mechanism to hold accountable those who used chemical weapons in Syria will allow them to enjoy impunity and fail to ensure that they will be held accountable in the future. On the other hand, we look forward to the final findings of the investigation of the alleged use of chemical weapons in Douma on 7 April. We renew our support for the Fact-finding Mission of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons to uncover the truth.

We share the Secretary-General's disappointment over about continued inconsistencies in the Syrian Government's declaration concerning its chemical-weapons programme. Once again, we call on the Syrian authorities to fully cooperate with the OPCW and provide it with the required information to end the discrepancies regarding the details of its chemical programmes.

In conclusion, we reiterate our firm and principled position condemning the use of chemical weapons anywhere, anytime and by any party. We underscore the need to hold accountable the perpetrators of those crimes, whether individuals, entities, non-State groups or Governments. We once again emphasize that there is no military solution to the crisis in Syria. The only solution is a political one in accordance with the 2012 Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex) and resolution 2254 (2015).

Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): I thank the Chinese presidency for convening this meeting. My delegation also thanks Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her comprehensive briefing on the issue of the use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic. In addition, my country commends Staffan de Mistura, Special Envoy of the

Secretary-General, for his tireless efforts with regard to the Syrian issue.

Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the Syrian authorities' cooperation with the relevant bodies of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), which led to the destruction of 27 chemical-weapon production facilities declared by Damascus. In that regard, my country commends the Syrian Arab Republic for its efforts and encourages it to cooperate further with a view to addressing the concerns raised by the OPCW in the report to the Secretary-General (S/2018/971, annex). Côte d'Ivoire also notes with satisfaction the visit made by the OPCW Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic in September to collect additional information and conduct interviews concerning the 2017 incidents, including in Kharbit Masasnah; Qalib Al-Thawr, in Al-Salamiyah; Yarmouk, in Damascus, and Al-Balil, in Souran. My delegation would like to see the analysis of the data collected by the Fact-finding Mission help identify those who used chemical weapons in the areas just mentioned with a view to bringing them before the competent courts.

My country welcomed the 17 September signing by the Russian Federation and Turkey of the agreement establishing a demilitarized zone in Idlib governorate. That agreement helped to prevent the much-feared armed confrontation among the warring parties, thereby avoiding the risk of the use of chemical weapons and of a humanitarian catastrophe. Côte d'Ivoire therefore urges all parties to play a decisive role in the implementation of the provisions of that agreement, particularly those relating to the withdrawal of heavy weapons and combatants from the demilitarized zone.

The steadfast position of Côte d'Ivoire is that the use of chemical weapons, both in times of war and peace, constitutes a grave human rights violation regardless of who uses them. The Council therefore has the imperative duty to respond collectively and firmly to those reprehensible acts, together as one. It is therefore regrettable that the institutional vacuum resulting from the failure to renew the mandate of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism in November 2017 is responsible for the inability to determine the facts concerning the use of chemical weapons in Syria and to bring the perpetrators before the competent international tribunals. My country therefore welcomed the mandate conferred upon the OPCW at the fourth special session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention, held from 26 to 27 June 2018 in The Hague, thereby enabling it to identify and bring to justice the perpetrators of chemical-weapon attacks.

Côte d'Ivoire stresses once again that the use of chemical weapons, whatever the circumstances, remains unacceptable both in terms of international law and the values that make up our collective conscience.

In conclusion, my country calls on the parties to the conflict in Syria to prioritize finding a political settlement to the current crisis through inclusive dialogue and in accordance with the relevant provisions of resolution 2254 (2015).

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the convening of this meeting and express our thanks to Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu and her team for her informative briefing. We reaffirm the support of the Government of Equatorial Guinea for the work of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), whose personnel operate in very sensitive and risky conditions.

We reiterate that the complete destruction of the 27 chemical-weapons production facilities declared by Syria is an important development that reflects the will and commitment on the part of national officials of the Syrian Arab Republic and of international parties, above all the Russian Federation, to take resolute steps towards the implementation of resolution 2118 (2013). It also aims to achieve the objectives of the original declaration on the Syrian Government's chemical-weapons programme. In that regard, we continue to commend the close cooperation between the OPCW and Damascus in order to clarify any discrepancies or inconsistencies that might have been observed in the original declaration and in the information exchanged in compliance with the obligations provided for in the Chemical Weapons Convention.

The Republic of Equatorial Guinea takes note that the Fact-finding Mission has not yet reached conclusions with respect to the events of 7 April in Douma. However, we endorse the idea that further investigation into the indicent should be carried out with rigour and professionalism, as well as the other five incidents reported to the OPCW Technical Secretariat.

With respect to the safety of OPCW personnel at investigation and inspection sites, our Government believes access to the sites of alleged incidents requires that the security of the mission be ensured on

a permanent basis in accordance with the provisions of the Conference of the States Parties held on 26 and 27 June. In that regard, we reiterate the need for the Technical Secretariat to implement the new measures aimed at mitigating high-security risks proposed by the United Nations Department of Safety and Security. That would lead to better planning on the upcoming inspections planned at the Barzah and Jamraya facilities of the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre.

We must remember that we are talking about the most effective, cheapest and easiest type of weapon available — certainly more so than nuclear weapons — and we must therefore prevent warring parties from using this weapon again in Idlib or any part of Syria at all costs. The demilitarization agreement on Idlib, which has brought about relative stability to the area, should make it impossible for chemical attacks to re-emerge.

Let us not be deceived. Opposing positions in the Security Council show that the end of chemical weapons in Syria effectively depends on a political agreement. In that context, the Security Council and the OPCW are the main channels for addressing this thorny problem. We recognize the important role they have been playing and we hope that the parties concerned will adopt a constructive approach to find a solution through direct and unhindered dialogue, which can make it possible to prevent and put a definitive end to any further use of chemical weapons in Syria by any party that intends to use them.

In that regard, we continue to emphasize the need for the establishment of a mechanism for attribution of responsibility, which would be essential in reaffirming the prohibition of the use of those weapons and to deter their use. We also welcome the decision of the Conference of the States Parties urging the Technical Secretariat to take steps in identifying those responsible for the use of chemical weapons in Syria. It is a step in the right direction, as we firmly believe that it is the common responsibility of the entire international community to uphold the prohibition on the use of chemical weapons and prevent those abominable attacks from being repeated and by ensuring that no one can be exonerated from responsibility in the event of those situations.

I conclude by reiterating the official position of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea: we oppose the production, trade, distribution, storage and use of chemical weapons by anyone and anywhere.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): As this is the first time I take the floor during this month, I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on your assumption of the presidency of the Security Council. I also thank Bolivia for its presidency of the Council last month.

I would like to thank the High Representative for her briefing. I think that it is clear that not enough progress has been made. At one level that is not a surprise, given the track record of the Syrian authorities. But at another level it just beggars belief: chemical weapons are universally prohibited weapons under international law. Everybody on the Council, except one member, stresses that and stresses the supreme importance of upholding that prohibition. I think that the interventions by Kuwait and France laid out very well the historical place that chemical weapons hold in global non-proliferation regimes.

What part of "these are prohibited weapons" do Syria and Russia not understand? I think it is almost absurd that we should have to rehearse each month quite how terrible those weapons are. It really ought to be globally recognized and upheld that we work to strengthen the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the Chemical Weapons Convention and to make sure those weapons are never used. That ought to be a universal good that everybody in the United Nations ought to be able to subscribe to. Future generations will judge us very harshly — but will judge two countries particularly harshly — for breaking that prohibition. As many speakers have said, the OPCW is doing good work. It is mandated to do that work. And the Conference of States Parties have decided to strengthen the work that it does.

There was an alternative — to have a Security Council mechanism — but that came to a grinding halt with a Russian veto. Therefore, we must all support the OPCW Director-General and his work to implement the decision adopted at the special conference of the States Parties held in June. For our part, the United Kingdom looks forward to arrangements being swiftly put in place so that the OPCW can begin its work on attribution of chemical-weapons attacks in Syria.

We call on all States that will be meeting in The Hague later this month to respect the decision, which was taken by an overwhelming majority in June. We look to all international partners to engage constructively in

discussions on the future work of the organization in Syria and elsewhere. On the funding point, it is in all our countries' interests for the OPCW to receive the funding it needs to continue to uphold the global norms against chemical weapons.

On other issues, I just want to endorse what others have said about the importance of the political settlement and of establishing the constitutional committee in line with the Istanbul summit declaration, which we very much welcomed at the time. And of course, on Idlib, we want that agreement to hold. It is the key to so much about the future of the people in Syria.

I want to conclude by addressing the allegations about the White Helmets. We keep hearing those allegations. Again, it beggars belief that we should have to take the floor to defend some of the bravest volunteers working in Syria. The Syrian civil defence have confirmed that none of their volunteers were involved, let alone killed, in the alleged incident referred to by the Syrian authorities in their recent correspondence, which is contrary to those authorities' fabrications.

Repeated allegations that the United Kingdom and its allies are preparing a chemical-weapons attack are malicious, absurd and they are simply an attempt to distract and deflect attention from the real situation on the ground in Syria. But I want to end by echoing what the representative of France said, that we will respond appropriately if there is a chemical-weapons attack. And that attack will not come from us.

Mr. Tenya (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. We also thank Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu for her important briefing.

We note with deep concern the growing number of allegations of the use of chemical weapons against the civilian population in the Syrian Arab Republic. Peru condemns those atrocious acts wherever they occur and considers them to be in open defiance of the non-proliferation regime and the maintenance of international peace and security. We are also concerned about the continued discrepancies, errors and omissions in the Syrian declaration. The recent information provided by the Government of Syria to the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) was once again insufficient. We reiterate that the Syrian authorities are legally and morally obligated to cooperate fully in order to clarify the remaining discrepancies and that the Council is responsible for safeguarding the non-proliferation regime.

Moreover, we wish to reaffirm our confidence in the work being carried out by the OPCW Fact-finding Mission, whose professionalism and technical rigour have made it possible to determine that chemical attacks have occurred in Syria. We look forward to the findings of its final report on the events in Douma and its account of several additional incidents that have been reported regarding the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria. We would also like to highlight the progress made by the OPCW in terms of logistical planning for the effective implementation of the decision adopted on 27 June at the special session of the Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention. We consider it of the utmost importance that investigations enable the OPCW to identify the perpetrators of those barbaric acts. We stress that identifying those resposible and conducting fair trials that lead to punishing those responsible will enable justice to be rendered to the victims, while also effectively discourage the repetition of those atrocious crimes and safeguard the non-proliferation regime. That also means restoring the rule of law, which is required to build sustainable peace, in line with resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva communiqué (S/2012/522, annex).

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): As this is the first time this month that I take the floor in the Chamber, allow me to congratulate you, Mr. President, on assuming the presidency of the Security Council. I would also like to thank the Plurinational State of Bolivia for its efforts and work during its presidency in October. I would like to thank Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing and for submitting to the Council the latest report (S/2018/971, annex) of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) on chemical weapons in Syria. Since the Polish position on chemical weapons is well-known, I would like to make my remarks brief.

The sixty-first report of the OPCW does not provide information that would allow us to state that the declaration submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic can be considered accurate and complete in accordance with the Chemical Weapons Convention and the decision of the OPCW Executive Council. We call on Syria to cooperate fully with the OPCW in order to clarify all existing gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies.

We continuously express our support for the OPCW Technical Secretariat, the Declaration Assessment Team and the Fact-finding Mission in their dedication and professional efforts to maintain and strengthen the effectiveness and integrity of the Chemical Weapons

Convention. We are concerned by the reports of the Fact-finding Mission on the use of chemical agents as weapons in Saraqib, Ltamenah and Douma. Poland strongly condemns the use of chemical weapons everywhere, including in Syria. We are of the view that the perpetrators of those crimes must be brought to justice. In conclusion, I support all efforts to enhance the integrity and efficiency of the OPCW. At the same time, I would also like to echo other speakers and emphasize the need for the resumption of the political process in Syria.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, Under-Secretary-General and High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for the information she provided today.

We once again highlight the destruction of the 27 chemical-weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic and encourage it to continue to submit reports regarding such facilities. We also encourage the Syrian Government to continue to cooperate in order to clarify outstanding issues for the Technical Secretariat of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW). We stress that dialogue and transparency are the best paths to overcome any doubt or discrepancy that the OPCW Technical Secretariat encounters. We reiterate our support for the work being carried out by the Technical Secretariat. We encourage Syria and the OPCW Technical Secretariat to continue to work concertedly.

We also consider it essential that the Technical Secretariat conduct on-site inspections in order to gather reliable information from those places where chemical elements or agents are alleged to have been used. In that regard, we highlight the upcoming inspections of the Barzah and Jamrayah facilities of the Syrian Scientific Studies and Research Centre. We will examine the results closely.

Bolivia categorically rejects the use of chemical weapons; it is an unjustifiable and criminal act regardless of where or by whom it is committed, as it is a serious crime against international law and life itself. Anyone who uses that type of weapon must be accountable to justice. To that end, we insist that the Security Council remain united in order to establish an impartial and credible mechanism to conduct an investigation that is conclusive, transparent and depoliticized to bring those responsible to justice. In that regard, we regret that other multilateral bodies such as the OPCW — whose technical work carried out to date we recognize and support — have been resorted to and given powers. However, we believe that the identification of those responsible should be undertaken by a mechanism that has the backing of the Council. With regard to the technical work of the OPCW, we will closely examine the results of any of the analyses and investigations that the Fact-finding Mission carries out on the alleged incidents in Douma and those reported in 2017.

Finally, we reiterate that the only way out of the conflict is through a high-level political dialogue that, within the framework of international law and, in particular, respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Syria, allows for the formation of a constitutional committee, in accordance with the Sochi declaration, resolution 2254 (2015) and the Geneva process under the auspices of the United Nations. We also highlight the latest agreement between Russia and Turkey, which has enabled a reduction of violence, mainly in the province of Idlib, as well as the meeting among Russia, Turkey, France and Germany. Those platforms for dialogue are essential if we want to reach a peaceful solution to the conflict.

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan): My delegation thanks the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, for her informative briefing and the professional work of her able team.

Despite the willingness of and some actions between the key parties aimed at eliminating all remaining ambiguities, we are still not able to see tangible progress on outstanding issues. My delegation believes that the Council should focus more on the following three factors. First is assistance and support to enhance cooperation and collaboration between the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the Syrian Government. It would help to move forward effectively on the resolution of all disputes concerning the initial declaration by the latter. The second factor concerns facilitating the effective investigation of all reported chemical weapons incidents in Syria. Every month, we hear only that the investigations with regard to Douma and other incidents are continuing. We do not see how the procedures are being carried out or what the problems and obstacles being faced are and how they are being addressed and solved. The third element is the existence of impunity and the absence of preventive measures, which are further stumbling blocks that prevent us from effectively countering the

continued threats of the use of chemical weapons. My country is firmly convinced that the Council must be united in tirelessly seeking a comprehensive solution to the issues of attribution and prosecution without transferring such prerogatives to other structures.

With regard to the decision of the fourth special session of the Conference of the States Parties, Kazakhstan advocates that the possible new functions of the OPCW, as well as the possibilities of expanding its mandate, should be considered and implemented with the participation and support of all States parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention.

To conclude, we hope that the Security Council will retain its leading role and special prerogative in resolving all such issues without transferring them to other structures. To do so would be to subject the issues to further risks of politicization and polarization.

Finally, Kazakhstan calls for the much-needed constructive and patient consultations and the tireless search for mutually acceptable solutions for the benefit of the people of Syria.

Mr. Orrenius Skau (Sweden): Since this is the first meeting for me personally this month, let me also congratulate you, Mr. President, and your team on your presidency and to thank Bolivia for its very active presidency last month.

During the conflict in Syria, we have witnessed the repeated use of chemical weapons as well as numerous other systematic and flagrant violations of international law by the parties to the conflict. The Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism concluded that the Syrian Arab Republic and the Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant were responsible for using chemical weapons. We condemn that in the strongest terms. It is a serious violation of international law and it constitutes a threat to international peace and security. Such use in armed conflict amounts to a war crime.

The proliferation and use of chemical weapons must end and those responsible for such crimes must be held accountable. We have repeatedly stated in the Security Council that impunity is not an option. As representatives know, to that end, we have worked tirelessly, including with the other elected members, to find an agreement on a mechanism for accountability. That is also why we joined the French-led International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons and why we supported the decision of the Conference of States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention at its special session to put in place arrangements to identify the perpetrators of the use of chemical weapons in Syria. While a mechanism established by the Council would have been and remains preferable, the issue is too important to be allowed to be blocked indefinitely. However, the decision of the Conference of States Parties does not relieve the Council of its responsibility. We now look forward to updates to the Council on the implementation of that decision as part of the monthly reporting under resolution 2118 (2013).

Let me make the following comments with regard to the most recent report on the elimination of chemical weapons in Syria by the Director-General of the OPCW (S/2018/971, annex).

First, we note that the Declaration Assessment Team of the OPCW is analysing the response by the Syrian authorities to the questions regarding the outstanding issues related to its chemical weapons declaration. We emphasize that all open issues must be closed as soon as possible. All remaining chemical weapons must be declared and destroyed, in line with resolution 2118 (2013). We urge the Syrian authorities to cooperate fully and actively with the OPCW so that the accuracy and completeness of its declaration can ultimately be verified.

Secondly, we reiterate our full support for the OPCW and our complete confidence in the independent, impartial and professional work of its Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic. We look forward to the upcoming reports regarding a number of pending investigations, including the final report on the alleged attack in Douma.

Thirdly, we remain deeply concerned about allegations that chemical weapons may be used again. In that regard, we fully support and endorse the remarks made by the Secretary-General in his letter transmitting the monthly report where it states "that any further possible use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic would be wholly unacceptable" (*S/2018/971*). All parties must be reminded of the clear and absolute prohibition on the use of chemical weapons under any circumstances.

As co-penholder on humanitarian matters in Syria, I would also like to take this opportunity to highlight and welcome the delivery of humanitarian assistance to Rukban, which took place this weekend. We want to

recognize the tremendous efforts by the United Nations and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent to make that happen, as well as the facilitation by Russia and the United States. It is critically needed relief for the approximately 50,000 people who are stranded in the camp and who have not received aid since January. However, we need more positive examples like this as we continue to push for safe, sustained and unimpeded humanitarian access to all people in need throughout Syria.

In the same vein, let me also take this opportunity to comment on the most recent developments on the political track. The recent meetings in relevant formats show that there is an international momentum that now needs to be seized solution, aiming to have the constitutional committee in place before the end of the year. At this critical time the Council needs to take a clear stand, show that we fully support the United Nations-led political process and make sure that there is some real progress in time for the Special Envoy's briefing later this month.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): We thank Ms. Izumi Nakamitsu, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her briefing.

We appreciate the continued efforts by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to clarify all outstanding issues regarding the initial declaration of the Syrian Government on its chemical weapons programme. However, we understand from the report of the Director-General of OPCW that the Secretariat remains unable to resolve all the identified gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies.

In that regard, we note that the Director-General has sent a letter to the Syrian Government emphasizing the importance of resolving the outstanding issues on an expedited basis.

We would like to once again stress the importance of meaningful and results-oriented communications and continued consultations between the OPCW and the Syrian Government with the clear objective of addressing all remaining outstanding issues once and for all. Meanwhile, we note the Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic (FFM) has continued its investigation with regard to the alleged use of chemical weapons in Douma in April. All parties should cooperate with the FFM in its ongoing investigation. We look forward to the issuance of its final report on that incident.

We also note that the FFM has continued to collect and analyse information related to five incidents of the alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria. Our position remains consistent and clear, namely, that any use of chemical weapons in Syria by any actor under any circumstance is totally unacceptable.

As the Secretary-General stressed in his letter dated 29 October, "it is imperative that no impunity for those acts be permitted by the international community" (*S/2018/971*) In that regard, we remain convinced that restoring the unity of the Council is the most sensible way forward to make tangible progress towards ensuring accountability.

Finally, we would like to underscore the importance of resuming political dialogue in order to sustainably address the Syrian crisis.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): I thank Ms. Nakamitsu for her informative briefing.

I will focus on three points: first, our support for the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW); secondly, accountability; and thirdly, political developments.

First, I will address our support for the OPCW and the establishment of the attribution mechanism. We thank the Secretary-General for the sixty-first OPCW report (S/2018/971, annex), and we support the objective and professional work of OPCW Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

It remains unacceptable that, almost five years after Syria joined the Chemical Weapons Convention, its declaration can still not be verified as accurate and complete. The Kingdom of the Netherlands reiterates the importance of the outcome of the fourth special session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention on 27 June. An overwhelming majority of member States reconfirmed and strengthened the standard against the use of chemical weapons by deciding on the establishment of an attribution mechanism. The Kingdom of the Netherlands therefore praises the Director-General of the OPCW for his commitment to implementing that decision expeditiously.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands expresses great concern about the obstructive attitude of the Russian Federation during the recent budget discussions in the OPCW. By frustrating the discussions on the OPCW budget for 2019, the Russian Federation is trying to

delay the legitimate establishment of the attribution mechanism. It also puts the overall functioning of the OPCW at risk. We call on the Russian Federation to engage constructively and to demonstrate support for the solemn purpose of the OPCW — and that purpose is to eradicate chemical weapons worldwide under a United Nations mandate.

Secondly, I turn to the need for accountability. Syrians deserve justice. Impunity for chemical weapons use cannot be allowed. Accountability for chemical weapons used in Syria is neither optional nor negotiable. The use of chemical weapons is never permitted by anyone under any circumstance. Therefore, upholding the international non-proliferation regime is crucial. That norm has been endangered by the Syrian regime. We look forward to the final report on the attack in Douma on 7 April to be published before the end of the year.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands welcomes the memorandum of understanding on cooperation between the Technical Secretariat of the OPCW and the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism to Assist in the Investigation and Prosecution of Persons Responsible for the Most Serious Crimes under International Law Committed in the Syrian Arab Republic since March 2011. The possibility for the OPCW to share information with the Mechanism can make an important contribution to combating impunity in Syria. It is therefore an important first step towards accountability. We remain convinced that a referral of the situation in Syria to the International Criminal Court (ICC) is by far the best option. It is the best way to achieve accountability for the most serious crimes that have taken place in Syria. As long as the Council is prevented from referring the situation in Syria to the ICC, we will continue our efforts for accountability elsewhere — in the OPCW, the International, Impartial and Independent Mechanism, the commission of inquiry and the International Partnership against Impunity for the Use of Chemical Weapons.

We emphasize that the archiving for the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism Joint Investigative Mechanism's is done on the basis of the applicable United Nations rules and procedures, as Ms. Nakamitsu shared with us during a previous meeting on chemical weapons in Syria (see S/PV.8174). A letter from the Office for Disarmament Affairs or the Secretary-General has no added value, and for that reason we cannot support the Russian request for a letter.

Thirdly, I will speak on political developments. We welcome the reduced level of violence in Idlib after the Turkish-Russian memorandum of understanding. We are concerned, however, by the recent statement of the Syrian representative here in the Council that "[we will] fully recover Idlib when we deem it necessary" (*S/PV.8383, p. 15*). An escalation of violence in Idlib by the regime would lead to a humanitarian catastrophe. It would reconfirm that the regime in no way prioritizes protecting the Syrian people. Citizens in Idlib deserve protection. A military confrontation will undermine lasting stability and peace.

We call on Turkey and Russia to involve the United Nations in the implementation of the humanitarian side of the memorandum of understanding. We must not allow ourselves to miss the window of opportunity offered by the situation in Idlib for the actual convening of the constitutional committee. It should be used as the starting point of a broader, sustainable political process on the basis of resolution 2254 (2015). The Kingdom of the Netherlands pleads for the convening of the constitutional committee as soon as possible, before the end of the year and before the departure of Special Envoy Staffan de Mistura. We call on all parties, particularly the Syrian regime, to cooperate constructively with the United Nations to prevent further delays in the political process.

In conclusion, with reference to the statement delivered earlier by our Russian colleague on the White Helmets, we reconfirm our point of view that the White Helmets are brave humanitarian workers. They have been attacked on the ground by the Syrian regime while engaging in purely humanitarian efforts, and those attacks are unacceptable.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

At the outset, I would like to thank High Representative Izumi Nakamitsu for her briefing. I have taken note of the report of the Organization on the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (S/2018/971, annex), transmitted recently to the Security Council by the Secretary-General. The OPCW has continued to engage with Syria on unresolved issues concerning the initial declaration of chemical weapons.

China supports enhanced coordination between the two sides for a proper settlement of the issues at hand. We have taken note that the OPCW Fact-finding Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic is investigating five cases of alleged use of chemical weapons in Syria, and hope to see conclusions from the investigation at an early date. Meanwhile, all parties hope that the Mission will produce the final investigation report on the use of chemical weapons in the Douma area. We hope that the mission Will carry out its work in strict compliance with its mandate.

China's position on chemical weapons is consistent and clear. We are firmly against the use of chemical weapons by any country, organization or individual, under any circumstances and for any purpose. The use of chemical weapons is not to be tolerated whenever or wherever it occurs. All alleged chemical weapons incidents must undergo comprehensive, objective and impartial investigations so as to draw conclusions, based on well-established evidence, that can withstand the test of facts and history and to bring to justice the perpetrators and parties responsible.

With regard to the adoption of the position on accountability for the use of chemical weapons at the fourth special session of the Conference of the States Parties to the Chemical Weapons Convention in June, China's position remains unchanged. We hope that the parties will work to bridge their differences through dialogue and consultations, and together cope with the threat posed by the use of chemical weapons.

Finally, I want to underscore that the issue of chemical weapons in Syria is closely related to the political settlement of the Syrian question. At present, the parties to the Syrian question are engaged in intensive diplomatic efforts to advance the Syrian political process. We call on all parties concerned to take a constructive approach, maintain unity on the issue of chemical weapons in Syria, resolve problems through dialogue and consultations and work together to prevent the recurrence of the use of chemical weapons. In that process, the parties should strictly abide by the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and fully respect the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Syria. We hope that the parties will work together constructively for an early comprehensive, just and proper settlement of the Syrian question.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

Mr. Ja'afari (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I wish to congratulate to you, Mr. President, on presiding over the proceedings of the Security Council this month. I hope that the Council will be able to benefit from the Chinese wisdom during your presidency.

I should like to begin by providing information to raise awareness among members of the Security Council. There is a Syrian terrorist named Jihad Diab. He is also known by the name of Abu Wa'el Diab. That terrorist travelled to Afghanistan in 2000 to fight alongside Al-Qaida. Pakistani security forces arrested him in 2001, along with other international terrorists. Pakistani security forces handed them over to United States intelligence services, which transferred them to the Guantánamo Bay detention camp.

It turns out that the American authorities have released a number of Guantánamo prisoners during the terrorist crisis that has been plaguing my country. Miraculously, those prisoners were able to leave Guantánamo and travel to my country. They obtained passports, visas and money. They travelled tens of thousands of kilometres without being stopped by anyone, managing to go from Guantánamo all the way to Syria. Among those individuals was Jihad Diab, who is currently residing in Turkey. He is visiting his mother, who is sick, in one of the hospitals there. He can move freely between Syria and Turkey to fight alongside the Al-Nusra Front, a terrorist entity that has been inscribed on the Council's lists. That is the first part of what I wanted to share with the Council today.

The second part deals with the details, and I trust that it will be of interest to the Council. The American Government reached an agreement with the Uruguayan Government in 2014. Pursuant to that agreement, a large number of terrorists from Guantánamo prison were transferred to Uruguay for so-called humanitarian reasons. That number included three Syrians, one Palestinian and one Tunisian. Jihad Diab was one of them. For humanitarian reasons, therefore, he was able to go from Guantánamo to Syria through Uruguay. The United States has stated that it reached an agreement with the Government of Uruguay, pursuant to which the Government of Uruguay committed to keeping that terrorist on its soil. However, that terrorist left Uruguay and went to Syria. Now residing in Turkey, he is

recruiting terrorists and sending them to Syria — either to Idlib or elsewhere in the country. We will relay that information to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015). We expect that the Committee will deliver a practical response this time by inscribing the name of that terrorist on the sanctions list — of course, if there is anyone who genuinely wants to tackle the heinous scourge of terrorism that has been plaguing my country.

I will tell the Council of another incident, which happened in 2014. We informed the Council about it in an official letter that was issued as document S/2014/195. I concerns another Syrian terrorist, named Haytham Qassab. That man transferred chemical material from Turkey to the so-called Ahrar al-Sham, which is the Al-Nusra Front, now located in Idlib. On 31 May, Turkish authorities released that terrorist after having caught him in the act and in possession of chemical material on Turkish soil. He was released to be able to play his terrorist role in Syria. That terrorist, Haytham Qassab, went to a Turkish supplier named Khalid Osman Malika, head of the Thurwa Import and Export Company in Turkey, which operates in the Polhajili area of Turkey. We can even describe the colour of the building's façade and give the building's address. Haytham Qassab requested material from that Turkish supplier, including white phosphorus, red phosphorus, potassium fluoride, methanol and resorcinol. He said that he needed those materials to produce white smoke in certain areas and then claim that it was the Syrian authorities that had bombarded those areas. The objective therefore was to use those materials as chemical weapons. That is the information I wished to provide concerning the terrorism from which my country has been suffering — terrorism supported by certain States.

Day after day, the practices of certain Western States on the Council demonstrate that they have come to enjoy exploiting the principles of international law, the provisions of the Charter of the United Nations and the rules governing the proceedings of the Organization. Those States have also manipulated United Nations platforms to advance their political agendas, with the aim of interfering in the affairs of other Member States, as well as to cover up for the crimes that they themselves perpetrated against the Syrian people, and also to cover up the crimes perpetrated by the armed terrorist groups to which they have provided myriad forms of support over the past seven years. That includes facilitating the acquisition by those terrorist groups of toxic chemical materials that they then used against the Syrian army and Syrian civilians alike.

Day after day, light is shed on unprecedented atrocities perpetrated against the Syrian people due to the heinous policies carried out by the Governments of those States. The most recent example is the discovery of mass graves in Raqqa several days ago. That was a consequence of the air strikes by the so-called global coalition against that city. The tragic discovery of those mass graves in Raqqa revealed 4,000 bodies, most of whom were women, children and the elderly. We had removed only 2 per cent of the rubble in Raqqa and already discovered 4,000 bodies to date in mass graves. That tragic discovery corroborates the veracity of the information we provided repeatedly with respect to the brutality of the crimes perpetrated by the coalition. The coalition completely destroyed the Syrian city of Raqqa — after having transferred Da'esh terrorists to the governorate of Deir ez-Zour — to prevent the national army from controlling the shared borders with Iraq, and to ensure that they could deliver on their plans to undermine the sovereignty and unity of the Syrian Arab Republic in conjunction with the militias under their wing.

Once again, my country calls upon the Security Council to shoulder its responsibilities to safeguard international peace and security, to act immediately to put an end to the crimes perpetrated by the global coalition against the Syrian people, to prevent the reoccurrence of those crimes and to hold the perpetrators of those crimes against my people accountable. My country calls upon the Security Council to conduct an international investigation into the crimes and mass killings that were uncovered in the city of Raqqa. We call upon the Council once again to put an end to the aggressive and illegal presence of American forces and other foreign forces on Syrian soil.

I would like to tell those who have a short memory that Syria's commitment to eradicating weapons of mass destruction does not date back to 2013 alone, rather 2013 was the year we joined the Chemical Weapons Convention. On the contrary, our commitment to eradicating weapons of mass destruction is a long-standing one. I would like to remind all present in the Council that my country presented, on 27 December 2003 to be exact, when we were a member of the Security Council, an initiative to make the Middle East

a zone free of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction. Nonetheless, at that time the United States delegation threatened to veto it if we put that proposal to the vote in Security Council. Therefore, our commitment is long-standing and dates back to 2003. In that regard, my country reiterates the call for Member States to make the Middle East a zone free of nuclear weapons and all weapons of mass destruction. We also calls upon the Council to urge Israel to join the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons as a non-nuclear-weapon State and to submit all of its nuclear activities and facilities to the monitoring of the International Atomic Energy Agency.

My country has honoured its commitments pursuant to the Chemical Weapons Convention and resolution 2118 (2013). Syria has always endeavoured to cooperate in a positive, transparent and flexible way to uphold its commitments, even as we face tremendous challenges and difficult, complicated and provocative security conditions resulting from the hostile actions of some regional and international stakeholders.

The Syrian Government made an unprecedented achievement in the Organization's history by irreversibly eliminating its chemical-weapons programme in record time and on United States vessels. Yet instead of commending what the Syrian Government has done, we observe that those States that are manipulating international law, those that are masters of the art of deception, are calling on the Security Council to hold theatrical meetings on an almost daily basis, with the sole aim of advancing provocative and unfounded allegations against the Syrian Government. I would underscore for those States once again that there is a huge, rampaging elephant in the Chamber. The elephant is the States that called for today's meeting are the same States that facilitated terrorist groups' acquisition of toxic chemical materials. The elephant is that those armed terrorist groups used that material against Syria. The elephant is the statements of senior officials of those States, accompanied by the statements we have all heard today, that the only way to save the armed terrorist groups is through the use of chemical weapons. Hence there are States in this Chamber that want to see chemical weapons used, and States that are prompting terrorist groups to use those weapons to once again hold such theatrical meetings and make unfounded accusations against the Syrian Government and say that the Syrian Government used those heinous weapons.

I now take this opportunity to note that these heinous weapons are European and American weapons. American weapons in Viet Nam and European weapons in the hands of France and Germany, as was mentioned by my colleague the representative of France, who mentioned that at the beginning of his statement this morning. Therefore, the use of chemical weapons is indeed a Western use.

One day I visited Hanoi on a Vietnamese aircraft. I travelled from Saigon to Hanoi. From the window of my aeroplane I saw thousands of giant craters in the ground between Saigon and Hanoi. When I asked, "What are those craters there?" I was told that they were craters left by the dropping of American chemical bombs, which incinerated all signs of life over a 1,000 kilometres between Saigon and Hanoi. I repeat, thousands of craters.

The elephant is that those statements are direct incitement for armed terrorist groups to use toxic chemical weapons against civilians in Idlib and for them to fabricate evidence and seek false witnesses to manipulate the crime scene. These States, with their media and political influence, stand ready to accuse the Syrian Government and intervene to save terrorist groups, and that is exactly what happened in Khan Al-Assal and Khan Shaykhoun.

The elephant is the scenes orchestrated by the White Helmets, which are the deceptive British branch of the Al-Nusra Front, about the alleged use of toxic chemical weapons in a number of Syrian areas. The elephant is that the fact-finding mission has continuously violated its mandate and failed to uphold professional standards. It has adopted a selective approach in its investigations. It has not been transparent or maintained the chain of custody of its samples. It did not comply with the fair geographical composition of its teams. That, I would say to Ms. Nakamitsu, is the truth.

The elephant is the use by the global coalition of white phosphorus, an internationally banned chemical agent that has bee unsed repeatedly against Syrian civilians.

The elephant is that these States are turning a blind eye to more than 160 letters that my Government addressed to the Secretary-General, the Security Council and the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1540 (2004), as well as the Counter-Terrorism Committee, concerning

the possession and use by armed terrorist groups of chemical and toxic materials.

The elephant is that the Security Council has not taken any measure to address those States that sponsor and finance the armed terrorist groups, those States that have facilitated the possession of toxic and chemical weapons for those groups.

In our most recent letter, we informed the Security Council about a tremendous explosion on Thursday, 18 October, in a part of a factory with a large amount of fertilizer, explosive material and barrels of liquid chlorine, a factory that belongs to an armed terrorist group in Idlib, specifically in the city of Termanin, which is 15 kilometres from the Turkish border. That factory is supervised by foreign Turks, British and Chechen experts. The explosion took the lives of nine of the so-called experts and two of the so-called White Helmets. We remind the Council that some Al-Nusra Front agents have previously transferred cargo from that factory to an unknown destination, in conjunction with the terrorist White Helmets.

With regard to the settlement of the so-called unresolved issues that have to do with Syria's first declaration, my country is of the view that a great deal of effort and time was spent on certain aspects of the declaration, which continues to be described as unresolved issues and yet they were widely considered and studied. My country believes that it is important to reconsider the composition of the current Declaration Assessment Team. It is important to introduce changes to the Team and incorporate scientific and technical expertise, rather than intelligence elements. It is important to let go of one-sided interpretations and to stop turning a blind eye to the interpretations of Syrian experts.

My Government calls the Council's attention to the fact that the nature of the work of the Declaration Assessment Team has changed. It was an assistance team and it has become an investigation team. That runs counter to the provisions of the agreement. Therefore, all the issues that were discussed remain unjustifiably pending, even though Syria has collaborated with the Declaration Assessment Team in general and has provided the it with all the information at its disposal. Syria has also responded effectively and without delay to the questions and inquiries submitted to it.

In conclusion, my country's Government has underscored time and time again before the Council and the OCPW Executive Council that it condemns any use of any type of chemical weapon or other weapon of mass destruction, as that constitutes a crime against humanity and a wrongful, immoral and unjustifiable act, no matter the circumstances, whereabouts or cause.

From this Chamber, we reaffirm that the Syrian army has never used any chemical weapons. We no longer possess those weapons, as Ms. Sigrid Kaag reported few years ago. We remind the Council that the Syrian chemical-weapon arsenal was completely destroyed in the Mediterranean aboard the American vessel *MV Cape Ray*. That was attested to by Ms. Kaag as well in her report submitted to the Council in June 2014.

This case, therefore, was closed four years ago, but there are some who do not want it closed. They want to continue to defame the Syrian Government every month during these theatrical meetings; indeed, these meetings are purely theatrical. A lot of effort and money here and at The Hague are spent while this file is essentially empty.

The Syrian Government confirms that it will continue to uphold all the commitments it undertook upon acceding to the Chemical Weapons Convention, as well as its commitment to fight terrorism, which will not be stopped by any form of political or media blackmailing, or even by the despicable exploitation of the blood of our innocent people in Syria.

The meeting rose at 12.05 p.m.

United Nations S/PV.8391

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8391st meeting

Tuesday, 6 November 2018, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu	(China)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mrs. Cordova Soria
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Melki
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Orrenius Skau
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Hickey
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation with respect to piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia (S/2018/903)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

18-36244 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Somalia

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation with respect to piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia (S/2018/903)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2018/990, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United States of America.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/903, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation with respect to piracy and armed robbery at sea off the coast of Somalia.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, France, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2442 (2018).

The meeting rose at 10.05 a.m.

United Nations S/PV.8392

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8392nd meeting

Tuesday, 6 November 2018, 10.10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu	(China)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mrs. Cordova Soria
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Ndong Mba
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mr. Melki
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Tumysh
	Kuwait	Mr. Alotaibi
	Netherlands	Mr. Van Oosterom
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Nebenzia
	Sweden	Mr. Orrenius Skau
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Ms. Pierce
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Letter dated 30 October 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/974)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the translation of speeches delivered in other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room U-0506 (verbatimrecords@un.org). Corrected records will be reissued electronically on the Official Document System of the United Nations (http://documents.un.org).

18-36250 (E)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

The situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Letter dated 30 October 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2018/974)

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representatives of Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia and Serbia to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, to participate in this meeting.

In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite His Excellency Mr. João Vale de Almeida, Head of the Delegation of the European Union to the United Nations, to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2018/974, which contains the text of a letter dated 30 October 2018 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council, transmitting the fifty-fourth report of the High Representative for Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina.

I now give the floor to Mr. Inzko.

Mr. Inzko: Before I start, I would like to acknowledge that a number of Central European States — including Poland, the Czech and Slovak Republics and others — are currently celebrating the 100th anniversary of their modern existence. My own country, Austria, will commemorate this date next Monday in a solemn ceremony in the State opera house. Only two days ago, Presidents Macron and Steinmeier commemorated the end of the First World War, which, as Council members know, started with shots in Sarajevo in June 1914.

France and Germany, which once seemed eternal adversaries, are now among the main pillars of the European Union. This is a lesson for the people of the Western Balkans that it can be done, lasting peace is achievable and reconciliation must be possible. The countries of the Western Balkans should emulate the German/French ideas of common history books, youth exchange programmes, common Government meetings between neighbouring countries and a common television programme, such as the French/German *Arte* programme. This could be called *Arte Balkans*.

The defining political event of the past six months in Bosnia and Herzegovina was the 7 October general elections. While international observers characterized the poll as genuinely competitive, the preceding months saw a worrying escalation in divisive public rhetoric, including hate speech and voter intimidation. Moreover, the immediate post-election period has been fraught with complaints of election irregularities. Public trust in the integrity of the electoral system seems to be at an all-time low, and restoring this trust through meaningful improvements must be addressed by the new authorities as an urgent priority.

Looking ahead, the announcement of final, certified election results is expected today, after which the period of forming parliaments and Governments will begin. Overall, the main ethnically defined parties seem to have won the most support in the parliaments, although in the Federation, certain multi-ethnic parties appear to have improved their results remarkably since the last elections. As no party has a clear majority, it is too soon to speculate on which coalitions will ultimately be formed at various levels of authority.

While the process of constituting parliaments and governments is just beginning, the future members of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency are already known: Šefik Džaferović of the Party of Democratic Action, Željko Komšić of the Democratic Front, and Milorad Dodik Alliance of Independent Social Democrats. Mr. Komšić's defeat of the outgoing Croat Presidency Member Dragan Čović has led a number of officials from the Croat Democratic Union of Bosnia and Herzegovina and from neighbouring Croatia to declare the election illegitimate and even illegal or anti-Dayton, despite the fact that it was carried out according to the same rules used in every election since 1995.

While some may have the political goal of wishing to change the current system, this cannot be used to deny the legality of a process conducted in line with the law and the Peace Agreement, nor can it be misused to justify future boycotts or blockages. The election of Mr. Dodik as the Serb member of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency has also raised questions, given his past numerous statements against the State of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Additionally, since the elections, he has made some provocative public statements about the Bosnia and Herzegovina flag and the taking of the oath.

Nevertheless, I strongly believe that it is not helpful or appropriate to judge the new Presidency before they have even taken office. They will have significant challenges ahead, and I for one will give them the benefit of the doubt in their ability and willingness to, as the oath of office requires,

> "to respect the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, implement the General Framework Agreement for Peace and its Annexes in their entirety, protect and promote human rights and fundamental freedoms, and protect the interest and equality of all peoples and citizens".

Despite the difficult environment, integration with the European Union (EU) has remained a bright spot in the political landscape over the past six months. This is one area where leaders with often competing visions of the country can find common ground. In this regard, it is noteworthy that following the submission of an initial 3,300 answers to the European Commission questionnaire during the previous reporting period, the Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities are now working on answers to some 650 follow-up questions received in June.

Despite this good news, other developments over the past several months have highlighted serious deficiencies in the rule of law. As I have said in past briefings, a lack of respect for the final decisions of the judiciary remains a problem. This was seen in the continued failure to implement the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitutional Court's decision in the *Ljubić* case, while local elections in the city of Mostar have not been held since 2008 due to another unaddressed Constitutional Court decision. Thus, for 10 years no elections were held in the city of Mostar.

In this regard, I must call attention to the authorities' ongoing failure since 2009 to implement the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights in the so called *Sejdić and Finci* and related cases, leaving in place severe discrimination against some citizens in exercising their right to stand for public office in the Bosnia and Herzegovina Presidency and House of Peoples. Similarly, a number of cantons in the Federation still have not met their legal obligation to harmonize their Constitutions and to ensure the full equality of Serbs as a constituent people. This too is unacceptable, because in this case we also have a Constitutional Court decision that Serbs are, of course, a constituent people wherever they live.

In addition to the issue of unimplemented court decisions, Bosnia and Herzegovina is also facing a problem with deep-rooted public disappointment in the criminal justice system's seeming incapacity to tackle corruption and deal with organized crime. For example, in Banja Luka, daily public protests have continued over seven months, including a demonstration with tens of thousands of citizens in the days before the elections, over what activists allege is a cover-up by the authorities in the suspicious death in March of David Dragičević. This case of that young student has to be solved urgently, and I will report to the Security Council again on it. This and a similar cases in Sarajevo have raised public outrage, and they are unfortunately not the only such cases. They are symptomatic of the state of the rule of law and the profound disappointment of citizens therein.

Besides the elections, another defining political issue of the past six months has been the dramatic rise in migrant arrivals in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the authorities' response. We have not had such dramatic numbers in past years as we have seen this year. Given Bosnia and Herzegovina's complex constitutional structure and internal political tensions, we need to be aware that this issue could deteriorate in a number of ways — as a humanitarian crisis, in the first instance; from a security point of view; and in terms of the political stability of the country.

Regrettably, the reporting period has continued to see a tendency on all sides for some politicians to deny or relativize war crimes and even to glorify war criminals. In this respect, keeping in mind the fact that two international tribunals have confirmed that genocide was committed in Srebrenica, I consider the repeal by the Government of the Republika Srpska of its earlier 2004 report, which had officially acknowledged the involvement of Republika Srpska

military and police forces in the July 1995 events, to be a significant step backwards for reconciliation. As Council members know, the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), which was created by the Security Council 25 years ago, in 1993, has declared that genocide took place at several locations, and that decision of the ICTY is now being questioned. This also stands in contrast with neighbouring Serbia, whose Parliament adopted an historical declaration condemning the crimes committed in Srebrenica in 2010, a declaration that has remained unchanged and in force.

In conclusion, I would like to make a few recommendations not only to be taken up by the incoming Bosnia and Herzegovina authorities, but also to be supported and encouraged by the wider international community. First, measures need to be undertaken immediately to strengthen the rule of law. Secondly, official institutions need to be supported and strengthened in their functionality, independence and stability. Stability is very important to Bosnia and Herzegovina and its future. Thirdly, economic development needs be kick-started. And finally, these reforms need to be addressed with a sense of urgency in the light of the huge departure of young people from Bosnia and Herzegovina, amounting to some 20,000 to 30,000 a year.

Despite the absence of these issues from the campaign platforms of many of the leading parties, once they take power they will not be able to ignore them. Those who declare EU membership as their goal will need to find compromises, support the functionality of the institutions and accelerate the pace of reform. We as an international community can best support the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina by promoting a vision of the country that recognizes that its integration with Euro-Atlantic structures will also require its leaders to work on integrating its people. After the elections, Bosnia and Herzegovina's political leaders will have an opportunity for a fresh start for the country, its entities and cantons but, above all, its wonderful citizens.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Inzko for his briefing.

The Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2018/989, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

I now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the vote.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian Federation will vote in favour of the draft resolution (S/2018/989) extending the mandate of the European Union-led Operation Althea for peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina. That is because the sponsors took into account our principled considerations, if only at the very last moment.

We are exceedingly disappointed with the working methods that the penholders for the draft resolution chose this year. Instead of taking the logical course of adopting a technical resolution extending Operation Althea's mandate, which in itself raises no doubts, the sponsors took the dangerous path of introducing a highly politicized document. And yet our reaction was easy to predict ahead of time. After all, we already had one sad experience in 2014, when the Russian delegation abstained in the voting and for exactly the same reasons that this time very nearly produced negative consequences for Althea in its current form. At the time, four years ago, we made it clear to colleagues that it had better not happen again (see S/PV.7307). It seemed as if it had worked and over the course of the next few years we had a more or less satisfactory document. And yet this year, for some reason, the sponsors decided to introduce complications into the draft text by imposing their own foreign-policy approaches and thereby manufacturing a crisis. Happily, common sense prevailed. We have to note that in recent years we have seen a trend among some of our Western partners during the process of arriving at agreements on United Nations decisions in which the culture of negotiation has been seriously devalued. That should be rectified immediately.

We want to stress that no Security Council document should predetermine the domestic or foreign-policy priorities of any State Member of the United Nations, and Bosnia and Herzegovina is no exception. In the Council's relevant resolutions and decisions, we need to do everything possible to avoid wording that might be interpreted as supporting the non-consensus-based Euro-Atlantic aspirations of a number of Bosnian forces. If the Security Council approved such provisions, they could undermine the already fragile situation in the country and put pressure on certain ethnic groups.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

In favour:

Bolivia (Plurinational State of), China, Côte d'Ivoire, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, France, Kazakhstan, Kuwait, Netherlands, Peru, Poland, Russian Federation, Sweden, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and United States of America

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): The draft resolution received 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 2443 (2018).

I now give the floor to the members of the Council.

Ms. Pierce (United Kingdom): I thank the High Representative for his briefing today and for the work of his Office in maintaining peace and security in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Bosnia and Herzegovina has long been a very important and almost totemic issue for the Council, if one goes back to the start of the conflict in the early 1990s. The United Kingdom remains committed to the continuing role of the High Representative and his Office. The Office of the High Representative remains the final authority and theatre regarding the civilian implementation of the General Framework Agreement for Peace, and that includes our support for the use of Bonn powers if the situation requires.

We welcome today's unanimous adoption of resolution 2443 (2018), which authorizes the European Union (EU)-led Operation Althea (EUFOR Althea) for a further 12 months. The consensus on the resolution demonstrates the commitment of the United Kingdom and the international community to security in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The Office of the High Representative and EUFOR Althea are crucial vehicles for enabling the international community to support the maintenance of Bosnia and Herzegovina's security, stability and territorial integrity, which are vital to the country's future as a modern democratic European State.

As I said, there was once a time when the Council dealt with Bosnia every day of its existence. I have had the privilege of working on the Balkans file for more than 20 years, on and off. I am somewhat saddened by what the High Representative tells us of how some issues are still unresolved and how they repeat themselves. But I also want to point out that the hard-won peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina are fragile and should not be taken for granted. While the current situation remains calm, threats to security remain, alongside new challenges such as increases in migration, as the High Representative mentioned. That is a very important issue for the EU and for Europe. It is our regional crisis, as it were, and something in which the EU has invested a huge amount of time, effort, money, coaching and patience. We will be hearing later from the EU Ambassador, who will be able to outline the EU's position more clearly.

I wanted to briefly address what the Russian Ambassador said in his statement before the vote. Russia is a member of the Contact Group and of the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board for Bosnia and Herzegovina. We would much rather see Russia trying to do everything it can to consolidate Bosnia and Herzegovina as a State and to help it modernize and make progress towards the Euro-Atlantic institutions that since the Dayton Peace Agreement was signed have been the foundation of its existence as a modern State in its region, Europe. I think that would be the best service that we could all do for Bosnia.

Turning to the subject of the elections, the United Kingdom welcomed the calm and orderly conduct of the elections, which were generally competitive, but we continue to be concerned about the level of the ethnic divisions in politics and the reports of irregularities. The inability to resolve key issues of election reform prior to the elections was disappointing and is a clear and ongoing concern. The divisive and nationalist political rhetoric, which was especially loud in the run-up to the elections, is dangerous and creates an environment where real long-term security and stability will be difficult to achieve.

It is also backwards-looking, and what Bosnia needs most of all is to move forward. Other countries in the Balkan regions are moving forward and making progress on their EU accession arrangements. Where they wish to, they are making progress with getting closer to NATO. That benefits regional security and stability, and Bosnia and Herzegovina once again risks being left behind in that regional modernization and progress. In particular, those in positions of responsibility should act in the interests of all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina rather than spreading divisive sentiment.

I want to echo what the High Representative said about waiting until those leaders have taken office before we properly hold them to account. I also want to make it clear that we will hold them to account. Political leaders need to show leadership and tolerance and they need to help modernize their country. At a crucial time following the elections, political leaders must work together in a cooperative manner to form Governments quickly so that progress can be made on key reforms, Euro-Atlantic integration and the 5+2 agenda. Those reforms are important because they will bring improvements to the day-to-day lives of all of Bosnia and Herzegovina's citizens. They are also important because they help to embed national and regional security and stability — an issue that, as I said at the beginning of my statement, has long occupied the Council.

Those in positions of responsibility should act in the interests of all citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and it is especially concerning that the rhetoric and reluctance to compromise are indicative of the wider political environment. We will be watching developments closely. It is also important that the political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina urgently address all judgments regarding elections in order to ensure that all citizens have the ability to participate fully in the democratic process, as they all deserve. It is regrettable that many of those issues have remained unresolved over several election cycles, which is a significant amount of time. Any resolution to those issues needs to meet international standards and uphold the principle of equality for all citizens, including the ability to elect officials and be elected.

Conversely, we welcome the progress made by Bosnia and Herzegovina on certain aspects of reform, for example in the adoption of agricultural and energy strategies and the eventual adoption of the criminal procedure code — although the delay in doing so was regrettable. We have also welcomed the continued cooperation on women and peace and security and encourage that to continue.

Finally, I want to echo what the High Representative said about reconciliation. Srebrenica remains the worst massacre in Europe since the end of the Second World War. Nine thousand Muslim men and boys were taken from their homes and murdered. It is absolutely vital that reconciliation efforts be made in genuine earnest and accelerated.

Mr. Ipo (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation thanks Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, for his comprehensive briefing on the fifty-fourth report on the implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina (S/2018/974, annex).

Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the progress made in Bosnia and Herzegovina in recent years, following the implementation of the Dayton-Paris Accords on 14 December 1995. The Accords, signed under the auspices of the international community, have helped to restore peace and endow the country with multicultural, multi-religious and multi-ethnic institutions.

My country notes with satisfaction the firm commitment of the Bosnian authorities to undertake the necessary reforms, particularly in the areas of the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary, in order to complete the cycle of socioeconomic transformation in the country and to encourage a favourable review of its application for membership of the European Union. My delegation also welcomes the Parliamentary Assembly's adoption of the necessary amendments to the code of criminal procedure in order to effectively combat the scourges of corruption and organized crime, which are the main obstacles to the economic and social take-off of the country. The adoption of those legislative amendments is an important step in the establishment of the rule of law and the fight against impunity, in order to promote national reconciliation.

However, that positive momentum should not prompt us to lose sight of the administrative and institutional dysfunctions, especially those of the general elections on 7 October. According to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and local non-governmental organizations, those elections were marred by unequal access to public media, irregularities on electoral lists and the partiality of local observers at polling stations. My delegation therefore encourages the Bosnian authorities to remedy the shortcomings observed in the organization of the elections and invites all stakeholders to submit their complaints in the context of the existing legal procedures.

Côte d'Ivoire is concerned about the persistence of ethnic tensions. We therefore call on all political groups and Bosnian populations to combine their efforts to preserve the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In conclusion, Côte d'Ivoire welcomes the spirit of compromise of

the States members of the Security Council that has made it possible to renew the mandate of the European Union-led peacekeeping force Operation Althea, whose mission remains relevant in the search for peace, security and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Ndong Mba (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to join previous speakers in welcoming to the Chamber Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to thank him for his report on the implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina (S/2018/974, annex).

Our delegation has taken note of the report of the High Representative on the achievements and positive developments in the country over the past six months, such as the recent adoption of the long-awaited amendments to the code of criminal procedure by the Parliamentary Assembly of Bosnia and Herzegovina, in line with international standards, as well as the completion of the country's eighth general elections on 7 October. We also commend the progress made by Bosnia and Herzegovina during the reporting period with respect to economic reforms in order to strengthen the economy, reform institutions and reduce unemployment. Those are all signs that there is a common vision for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

However, while significant progress has been made, we are concerned by the decision in August of the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska to revoke its support for the Srebrenica report of 2004. That revocation only serves to undermine the political stability and prosperity of the country, endangering all the achievements and efforts made by the parties for reconciliation among various ethnic groups and communities and prospects for the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In that regard, we call on all parties to refrain from divisive rhetoric and actions that could endanger the stability of the country and hinder the implementation of the Peace Agreement.

On the other hand, regarding the general elections on 7 October, the Government of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea welcomes the fact that the elections were held without any serious security incident, as reflected in the report of the High Representative. At the same time, we regret that the parties did not implement the recommendations of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights in order to improve the integrity of the electoral process before the elections. In that context, while we praise the progress made, we believe that there is still much to be done and that we must continue working towards a common vision of the future that will help to foster a lasting national unity that will cement Bosnia and Herzegovina's role in the Balkans, Europe and the world. We therefore encourage the parties to amend the laws regarding the House of Peoples of the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, to strengthen the rule of law, ensure the full implementation of the election results and pursue efforts to contain and eliminate ethnic divisions, crime, corruption, violent extremism and terrorism, which remain key issues in ensuring stability and prosperity in the country and the region.

In conclusion, my delegation advocates full respect for the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We commend the commitment of the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina within his mandate and we emphasize our support for his efforts to promote the implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. We also welcome the extension of the mandate of the European Union-led peacekeeping force Operation Althea, which we have just unanimously adopted (resolution 2443 (2018)), and we hope that the mission will continue its important work of assisting the country and facilitating the process of achieving lasting peace and stability, as well as its support for the work of the High Representative and the United Nations country team. The Republic of Equatorial Guinea is ready to work with the international community to support the process towards lasting peace and security and sustainable development in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Tenya (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening this meeting. We also thank High Representative Valentin Inzko for his important briefing. We would like to highlight the work done by his Office in support of the implementation of the civilian mandate of the General Framework Agreement for Peace and express our support for his leadership.

Peru recognizes the unity, territorial integrity and sovereignty of Bosnia and Herzegovina and considers it necessary to move to strengthen its independence. For that reason, we note with concern the limited progress made on the implementation of the 5+2 agenda, which has five objectives and two conditions for the closure of the Office of the High Representative for

the Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina. We consider the general elections of 7 October and the political process that led up to them to have been positive to the extent that they were carried out peacefully and inclusively. It is always important for citizens to be able to choose their representatives freely through free and democratic elections. At the same time, we must deplore the fact that Bosnia and Herzegovina's electoral procedures could not be amended to facilitate a more far-reaching democratic process and that ethnic confrontation prevailed over the constructive approaches that the country and its citizens require in order to build sustainable peace.

Faced with such a situation, we must continue to emphasize the need to strengthen the rule of law, build inclusive institutions and, in that connection, promote political dialogue and reconciliation. We cannot continue to lament incidents of violence. Political leaders must live up to their responsibility in that regard and share a vision for the future that is centred on the economic and social development of the country. In that regard, we emphasize the value of diversity and the importance of safeguarding it in order to build a strong democracy based on inclusive, transparent and accountable institutions that guarantee access to justice and the peaceful resolution of conflicts and prevent further violence.

We view positively the efforts aimed at European integration and compliance with the decisions of the Constitutional Court. With regard to the latter, however, we must stress the urgent need to harmonize local legislation. We underscore the importance of the amendments to the criminal procedure code that have been adopted in order to more effectively combat organized crime and corruption, as well as the need to complement them with the creation of a specialized prosecutor's office and criminal chamber. We also underline the importance of safeguarding the autonomy of the various parts of the system of administration of justice and of respecting the role that the press and civil society organizations are called upon to play in order to guarantee the rule of law in a democratic society.

We deplore the rhetoric of hatred, ethnic confrontation, belligerence and the glorification of war criminals. We believe that the decision of the National Assembly of the Republika Srpska to repeal the report on the Srebrenica genocide reveals a rejectionism that must be condemned. We note with particular concern that those tensions continue to hamper access to justice, reconciliation and the safe and dignified return of refugees and internally displaced persons to their homes, with full recognition of their ethnic and religious diversity.

I conclude by stressing the importance of the parties' full cooperation with the High Representative and with the European Union-led peacekeeping force Operation Althea. They can count on Peru's full support in fulfilling the mandates we have just renewed.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I thank High Representative Inzko for his work in Bosnia and Herzegovina for the past nine years and for his dedicated leadership of the Office of the High Representative.

The Office's mission reflects the very ideals that the Security Council envisions for a modern Bosnia and Herzegovina, a peaceful and viable democracy that is on course for Euro-Atlantic integration and responsible for its own destiny and future. The United States reiterates its strong support for the mandate of the High Representative under the Dayton Accords as the final authority on the interpretation of the civilian implementation of the Dayton Peace Agreement. We consider the role of High Representative Inzko to be essential, especially in the aftermath of the October general elections and as the country continues to contend with the divisive nationalistic rhetoric that threatens to undermine gains made under the agreement. We also commend the continued work of the European Union-led peacekeeping force Operation Althea and its role in preserving a safe and secure environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The United States is pleased to support the renewal of its mandate.

We are concerned about those who seek to weaken the constitutional order of the single State of Bosnia and Herzegovina, composed of two entities and three constituent peoples, and we call on the members of the Council to remain vigilant against any efforts to undermine Bosnia and Herzegovina's State-level institutions. We renew our collective commitment to upholding the Dayton Peace Accords by maintaining the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the country.

The United States will hold accountable those who threaten Bosnia and Herzegovina's peace, security and stability. Accountability is essential to discouraging spoilers to the country's political process. Let me reiterate a position that we have repeatedly made clear in the Chamber. Bosnia and Herzegovina's leaders must demonstrate the political will to follow through

on the commitments necessary to cementing their country's path into the European Union and NATO. Euro-Atlantic integration is the only path for Bosnia and Herzegovina's future as a responsible global player. Those steps must be taken in concert with efforts to strengthen the rule of law, tackle corruption, increase economic opportunity and otherwise respond to the needs of all the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina, regardless of their ethnicity or religion.

There is much to be optimistic about. We see Bosnia and Herzegovina's future in the 23-year-old poet who organized a nationwide poetry contest to fight hate speech. We see the country's future in the work of its Interreligious Council, which just celebrated its twentieth anniversary and dedicates its time to promoting interfaith dialogue and visiting the sites of attacks on religious institutions, four of which it has visited in the past year. We also see the country's future in the ethnically diverse students from the town of Jajce, who protested the further segregation of schools after local authorities sought to build a school just for Bosnian Muslim class members.

The United States looks forward to a time when Bosnia and Herzegovina fully satisfies the objectives and conditions for the closure of the Office of the High Representative, also known as the 5+2 agenda, as established by the Peace Implementation Council.

Mr. Tumysh (Kazakhstan): I thank High Representative Valentin Inzko for his comprehensive update on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina based on his recent report (S/2018/974, annex). We are also pleased to see in the Chamber the delegations of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European Union, Serbia, Croatia and neighbouring countries.

Over the past six months since the last meeting of the Security Council on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina (see S/PV.8248), important events have occurred in the country, most importantly the general elections held on 7 October. We believe that the elected political leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina have a new opportunity to focus on the future of the country and not on its past and to meet the national interests of all of its peoples and citizens. It is now vital that the new leadership realize and accept responsibility for the situation in the country and make every effort to move further in a unified direction. The international community should help it engage in constructive dialogue in a spirit of cooperation. That is where we can see the growing importance of the special role and responsibility of external actors who have the opportunity to positively influence the situation.

In that context, Kazakhstan welcomes the continuous efforts of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe mission in promoting stability and reconciliation, while assisting Bosnia and Herzegovina on its path to regional, political, economic and social integration. We commend the project activities of the mission in the areas of good governance, justice and education, which uphold human rights and the rule of law for all citizens. We also believe that today's extension of the mandate of the European Union-led peacekeeping force Operation Althea for another 12 months is a necessary step on the path to bringing peace and sustainability to the region.

In May, the members of the Security Council voiced in this Chamber both the achievements and their concern about the many serious problems that exist in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Unfortunately, those challenges have not gone away and are waiting for their further settlement. We therefore consider it necessary to speed up the process of forming the House of Peoples, in accordance with the decisions of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the functional Government of the country at all levels for their urgent implementation in practice.

We take positive note that, within the framework of the reform agenda for 2015 to 2018, the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina are implementing measures for broad structural socioeconomic reforms. However, as mentioned by the High Representative in his report (S/2018/974, annex) most of those reforms remain at the preparatory stage, including the depoliticization of public administration and the restructuring of State-owned enterprises, as well as reforms in legislation entrenching the rule of law in every region of the country.

In that regard, the main challenge is still in formulating constitutional reform in order to improve the system of public administration. The Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina should work closely with the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank to improve the state of the economy and implement reforms to improve the business and investment climate. The Government-led reform of the financial system should be aimed at reducing the share of the shadow economy and the related negative implications of corruption. To

that end, the role of the citizens themselves is invaluable, and non-governmental organizations and the media must be supported at the legislative and executive levels. In that context, it is important to accelerate the adoption of a nationwide strategy for managing public finance, as well as strategies in areas such as energy, employment and the national programme to harmonize the Bosnia and Herzegovina legal system with European Union standards.

Kazakhstan additionally notes the issue of migration and refugees that was brought to the attention of the Council at its previous meeting on this issue. The recent events that took place in Bosnia and Herzegovina on the border with Croatia at the end of October clearly demonstrated the existence of that problem and the need for the timely and high-quality response of the authorities and international organizations. Along with the resolution of priority issues on the accommodation of migrants, it is necessary to comprehensively approach the settlement of that big challenge in the long term. Stability not only in Bosnia and Herzegovina but in South-East Europe in general depends on that. Therefore, not only the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also international organizations, foundations and relevant European Union structures, should actively participate in that process.

To conclude, our delegation calls on the new leadership of Bosnia and Herzegovina to take all measures to eliminate the existing costs of the judicial system and ensure depoliticization, impartiality and independence, including in the consideration of war crimes cases. Kazakhstan also considers it crucial to emphasize the high importance of respecting the Dayton Accords as the basis not only of civil peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, but also of stability and security in the region. Reconciliation in Bosnia and Herzegovina can be an example of resolving one the most complex and protracted conflicts in the history of Europe and become a pattern for other States and regions of the world to follow.

Mr. Van Oosterom (Netherlands): I would like to thank Mr. Valentin Inzko for presenting his twentieth report (S/2018/974, annex) as High Representative, a sobering milestone. We highly value his dedicated personal efforts and persistence in carrying out his mandate for the greater good of the citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The Kingdom of the Netherlands aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union later this morning.

I will focus on the following issues: first, the rule of law; secondly, the Office of the High Representative; and thirdly, the issue of stability.

First, with regard to the rule of law, in the previous debate on this item in the Council in May (see S/PV.8248), we expressed concerns about the rule of law in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We have seen some responsible steps taken since then, such as the passing of amendments to the criminal procedure code, but serious concerns remain. Erosion of the rule of law is a threat to any democracy. When in combination with divisive and revisionist rhetoric, such as that which we continue to see in Bosnia and Herzegovina, it becomes a toxic mix. We therefore call on the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to strengthen the rule of law in their country, and to do so convincingly and at all levels. Let me reiterate that the divisive and revisionist rhetoric of political leaders is conducive neither to reconciliation and cooperation, nor to the political need to make compromises. We underline the points on accountability in that context that were just made by our American colleague. We also call on the authorities to amend the election law, and State institutions must continue to function properly.

Secondly, I turn to the High Representative and his Office. With the rule of law under pressure and rhetoric thriving, upholding the civilian aspects of the General Framework Agreement for Peace becomes even more crucial, and the engagement of the Office of the High Representative becomes even more pertinent. The circumstances for closure of the Office are not yet there As was pointed out by Mr. Inzko, Bosnia and Herzegovina has made limited progress in completing the 5+2 agenda. The Kingdom of the Netherlands remains steadfast in its support for the High Representative and his Office. Twenty-three years after it establishment, the work is far from done — unfortunately, I would like to add.

Thirdly and finally, I will address stability. It is a precondition for strengthening the rule of law and a precondition for upholding the civilian aspects of the Framework Agreement. The European Union-led peacekeeping force Operation Althea is key in supporting the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina in maintaining a safe and secure environment for its

citizens and maintaining stability in the region. We therefore welcome the unanimous adoption today of resolution 2443 (2018), renewing the mandate of Operation Althea.

In conclusion, in his first report to the Security Council, the first High Representative, Carl Bildt, wrote that lasting peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina "requires a genuine commitment to ... the building of a future in common" (*S/1996/190, para. 104*). That observation still holds truth today. The Kingdom of the Netherlands continues to support Bosnia and Herzegovina's Euro-Atlantic integration in order to ensure the future prosperity and security of its people and the region. That future depends on the political leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina and their will to reconcile, cooperate and conclude highly needed political compromises. In short, it depends on their will to truly lead. The time to do so is now.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): Let be begin by thanking High Representative Valentin Inzko for his briefing. Poland would like to convey its full support for his Office and appreciation for its pivotal role in maintaining stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The international community has entrusted the High Representative with great responsibility and provided him with far-reaching prerogatives, the Bonn powers, which should be used if the situation requires.

Poland aligns itself with the statement to be delivered by the observer of the European Union later in our discussion.

There are clear conditions set by the Peace Implementation Council for the closure of the Office of the High Representative, namely, the 5+2 agenda. Like all other members of the international community, Poland would like nothing more than to see them fulfilled. As yet, however, that has not happened.

We welcome the adoption today of resolution 2443 (2018), which extends the mandate of the European Union-led Operation Althea for another year, and the European Council conclusions of 15 October, which confirmed its readiness to continue the mission's executive military mandate of maintaining a safe and secure environment. As contributors to the mission since its inception, we are proud to be part of that effort.

We note with appreciation the commitment of the State-level institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina to European integration as manifested in the ongoing work on the European Commission questionnaire. We would also like to see the activation of the membership action plan as soon as possible so that all citizens might benefit from stability and security within Euro-Atlantic structures. It lies squarely within the responsibilities of the governing elites to remove all obstacles along that path, particularly with regard to the registration of immovable defence property.

There is much cause for concern in Bosnia and Herzegovina today. It is worth recalling that, although there is no imminent danger of armed conflict, stasis should not be mistaken for stability. Almost a quarter of a century after the Dayton Peace Agreement, the country's political elites have signally failed to instil the sense of common destiny that could unite the country's peoples. Loyalties still lie along the ethnic lines. Young people, the future of the country, emigrate to seek a better future elsewhere. Centrifugal forces fuelling nationalistic rhetoric glorifying convicted war criminals and a lack of economic perspective, combined with the endemic weakness of the State, are a dangerous mix.

We meet today at a very delicate moment as the outcome of the October elections is just being finalized. We welcome the fact that they were genuinely competitive and conducted peacefully. Regretfully, however, neither the reform of the electoral law nor the rulings of the European Court of Human Rights have been introduced, and the situation remains sensitive. It is now incumbent upon political parties to proceed promptly with the formation of a Government on all levels so that the will of the people is implemented and fundamental institutional stability is put in place. It is also the responsibility of the political elites to continue with the reform agenda with firmness renewed energy.

In conclusion, let me reiterate that Poland is vitally interested in seeing Bosnia and Herzegovina as a united, prosperous and modern democratic country, strongly anchored in the Euro-Atlantic structures. We have been with Bosnia and Herzegovina since the beginning, and we will continue our active support as we have done so far.

Mr. Melki (France) (*spoke in French*): I thank the High Representative for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Valentin Inzko, for his enlightening briefing on the latest developments, particularly in the electoral process.

The citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina went to the polls on 7 October to elect their representatives at the level of the cantons, parliamentary assemblies and the presidencies. More than 20 years after a deadly conflict was brought to an end by the Dayton Peace Accords, we can today be pleased by the holding of elections deemed free by observers of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. However, the many irregularities referred to in the report (S/2018/974, annex) of the High Representative deserve our attention so as to prevent their recurrence in future elections.

The new authorities will face three priorities following the elections. The first, which is essential for the future of the country, is national cohesion. As pointed out by the High Representative and several members of the Security Council, the provocations and controversies launched by some political leaders fuel inter-community tensions and undermine efforts to build trust among the communities. It is the responsibility of the new leaders to reject rhetoric and positions that are likely to reopen the wounds of the past. As such, almost a year after the closure of the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia and the creation of the Residual Mechanism, France strongly condemns the glorification of crimes and war criminals, regardless of their community of origin. It is unacceptable that after the commission of cruel acts — and we all remember the Srebrenica massacre, among others, as has been recalled — that politicians continue to lift up as examples those responsible for the most serious crimes. Strengthening national cohesion requires more than ever that there be progress towards a more consensual operation of the institutions of Bosnia and Herzegovina. We welcome the amendments made to the criminal procedure code, which are an all-too-rare example of a constructive approach.

National cohesion will have to be based on justice. That is the second priority, no less essential, on which I wish to expound. The rule of law and respect for human rights are not a luxury to which only prosperous countries can lay claim. On the contrary, it is a condition for just and sustainable economic and social development, the vitality of civil society and the stability of institutions. France therefore calls on all political actors to respect the decisions taken by national and international judicial bodies, including on the issue of electoral reform, in the interests of Bosnia and Herzegovina and Bosnian citizens.

On the other hand, it is essential to make progress in the fight against corruption and organized crime and to ensure that all investigations are conducted in the most impartial manner. We expect the Bosnian authorities to take strong measures against a phenomenon of corruption that fuels mistrust of the authorities and encourages younger generations to continue to leave the country. The High Representative has just mentioned the statistics of those departures, a worrying indicator for the future of the country.

That brings me to the third and last priority, which is the European perspective. France associates itself with the statement to be delivered on behalf of the European Union in a few minutes. The prospect of European Union integration, in due course and when the conditions are met, is an extension of the European Union's widespread and multifaceted involvement in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Throughout that involvement, the European Union military Operation Althea, to which we have just renewed our collective support and which must continue its transition with regard to its non-executive tasks, continues to contribute to the stabilization of the country. The competent European services, for their part, are redoubling their efforts to support Bosnia and Herzegovina in its rapprochement with the European Union and to prepare an opinion on the candidature of Bosnia and Herzegovina for membership in the European Union. It is up to Bosnian political leaders to implement the necessary reforms, particularly in the areas of the rule of law, human rights and economic and social development, in order to make progress along their path towards Europe. In that perspective, we encourage Bosnian political leaders to favour a consensual decision-making process.

As we commemorate the centenary of the end of the Great War, we have the responsibility to bear witness to the cruel violence that ravaged Europe over the past century and to defend, with force and conviction, a spirit of reconciliation. It is not only an ideal but also a practice, as has been mentioned. France does that on a daily basis with Germany. We encourage the leaders of Bosnia and Herzegovina to engage resolutely in that direction with the interests of all Bosnian citizens as their sole objective.

Mr. Orrenius Skau (Sweden): Let me also begin by thanking the High Representative, Mr. Valentin Inzko, for his informative briefing today. Sweden continues to fully support his mandate and his important work for Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Twenty-three years have passed since those intense November weeks in Ohio, when the Dayton Aagreement on the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina was being negotiated. The Agreement marked the starting point of the long path towards reconstruction and reconciliation. While much has been achieved over the years, important steps remain for Bosnia and Herzegovina to build a country of prosperity, peace, stability and equality for all.

The conduct of general elections last month was one such important step. We welcome that the elections could proceed without any major security incidents. At the same time, we condemn the threats and attacks against journalists during the election campaign. We also regret that the campaign was tainted by divisive and nationalistic rhetoric, and that more attention was not given to what is most urgently needed — reform.

Socioeconomic reforms and improvements in the rule of law must be at the centre of Bosnia and Herzegovina's political priorities. High unemployment, widespread corruption and mismanagement erode the trust between citizens and authorities. As we heard from the High Representative, young and educated citizens are leaving the country to look for opportunities elsewhere. That is a worrying trend that must be reversed. Yet the pace of reform has unfortunately stalled in recent years. The country's political leaders must now take on the responsibility they have to enable it to make a rapid return to a path of reform. To that end, all the relevant actors must now engage in constructive dialogue aimed at forming Governments and parliaments at all levels without further delay.

Bosnia and Herzegovina reconfirmed its strategic priority of joining the European Union (EU) with its application for membership in 2016. The further integration of the Western Balkans remains a top priority for the European Union. We welcome the participation of the observer of the EU in our meeting this morning, elaborating on EU efforts, and align ourselves with his statement. A credible EU perspective, based on progress according to its own merits, continues to be one of the most powerful drivers of peace, stability and prosperity in the region. In the work of achieving deeper integration, Bosnia and Herzegovina and its European partners must now strengthen their cooperation to meet their common challenges, which include trade and sustainable economic development, environmental protection, organized crime, terrorism and migration, to mention only a few.

Regional cooperation and reconciliation in the Western Balkans is crucial to stability and progress. Sweden therefore supports the Regional Cooperation Council's important work in strengthening good-neighbourly relations in the region. Bridging cultural and social differences through increased regional exchanges is essential, not least among children and young people, and involving young people in peacebuilding activities is definitely an important prerequisite for sustaining peace anywhere, as outlined in resolutions 2250 (2015) and 2419 (2018). In that same context, a stable peace also requires the full participation of women. More attention and devotion to that issue is needed, and future reports from the High Representative should better reflect the specific challenges and opportunities for women. Such analyses integrating a gender perspective would benefit our future briefings and inform a more strategic response.

Finally, for a country to move forward, its focus must be on the future rather than mired in the past. That is true both for reconciliation within the country and for its relations with neighbours. Bosnia and Herzegovina can continue to count on strong international support, and in that regard we welcome today's unanimous adoption of resolution 2443 (2018), renewing the mandate of the European Union military mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The European Union's commitment to Bosnia and Herzegovina's EU perspective is unequivocal. Sweden, for its part, will remain a steadfast partner of Bosnia and Herzegovina on its path towards a stable and prosperous future.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): I would like to begin by thanking Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, for his comprehensive briefing on the latest report on the implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina (S/2018/974, annex). We would like to reiterate our support for the sovereignty, territorial integrity and unity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

We welcome the positive developments apparent in Bosnia and Herzegovina in the reporting period, particularly its continued engagement with the European Union (EU) on the country's accession process and progress on some legislative aspects, such as the code of criminal procedure. That progress is testament to the country's commitment to the EU integration process, with far-reaching long-term positive consequences

for the stability and prosperity of the country and the region at large.

We are nevertheless concerned about some of the reported developments that have undermined Bosnia and Herzegovina's political stability. In particular, we note the divisive rhetoric and actions that continue to challenge the constitutional order and integrity of the State-level judiciary system in the country. In that regard, we call on all authorities and political leaders to fully respect the decision of the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Respect for the rule of law and the authority of the State institutions established under the Dayton Accords is fundamental to the State-building process in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is therefore important to ensure that all parties refrain from provocative statements and actions that could undermine the country's sovereignty, territorial integrity, cohesion and constitutional order.

We also note the continued disagreement concerning changes to Bosnia and Herzegovina's electoral law. We believe the issue must be handled very carefully, as it has the potential to undermine the country's continuity and stability. It is our hope that the Constitutional Court's ruling on its review of the election law will be implemented in a manner consistent with the Dayton Peace Agreement. We also encourage the relevant parties to undertake serious political dialogue to address and solve differences amicably.

In conclusion, we would like to express our support to the High Representative and his Office in discharging their mandate to monitor the implementation of the civilian aspects of the Dayton Accords. We call on the parties to extend the necessary cooperation, which is crucial to the work of the High Representative. We also recognize the vital role played by the EU military mission in Bosnia and Herzegovina, EUFOR Althea, in maintaining safety and stability in the country. We welcome the adoption of resolution 2443 (2018) renewing the mission's mandate for another 12 months.

Mr. Nebenzia (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Regrettably, we have concluded that the quality of the reports of the High Representative for the Implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina gets worse every time. It is clear that Mr. Inzko is trying to tailor his assessments of what is going on in the country according to his notion — which suits him and the other supporters of the never-ending preservation of an outside protectorate for Bosnia and Herzegovina — of the incapacity of the country's governing bodies and entire political class generally. We believe that approach is fundamentally mistaken, disrespectful to Bosnians and untethered to reality.

Despite the painful legacy of the 1992-1995 conflict, Bosnia and Herzegovina is gradually developing on both the social and economic fronts. Its gross domestic product, exports and people's incomes are increasing and unemployment is falling. On 7 October general elections were once again held in accordance with democratic standards, as was confirmed by international observers from the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe. A foreign policy based on a balance of the interests of the Bosnian parties is being implemented. In 2010 and 2011, Sarajevo successfully carried out the functions of a non-permanent member of the Security Council, and in 2015 it presided over the Council of Ministers of the Council of Europe. Problems arise, as with any State, but they are far from insurmountable for Bosnians.

The successful experience of the Brčko District, where the foreign Supervisor's activities had been frozen since 2012, clearly shows that the Office of the High Representative is a relic of the past for Bosnia and Herzegovina. Worse than that, its very presence hampers the internal Bosnian dialogue and fuels attitudes of dependency among a certain part of the establishment. For the entire period of almost 10 years that the High Representative has been in Bosnia and Herzegovina, he has exploited the resources of his Office to advance the NATO and European Union agendas and settle accounts with Bosnian leaders who acknowledge the protectorate's irrelevance, instead of carrying out the tasks assigned to him with regard to implementing the civilian aspects of the General Framework Agreement for Peace.

In future, we urge the High Representative to avoid tendentious comments about one or other of the country's political parties on the eve of elections, as occurred during Mr. Inzko's interview with the Austrian newspaper *Wiener Zeitung* on 2 October, widely reproduced in the Bosnian media. In the interview, the High Representative directed one-sided criticism at the major Bosnian Serb party, the Alliance of Independent Social Democrats, breaching every democratic norm and his own mandate by essentially joining the election campaign on the side of the opposition.

The smearing of Bosnian Serbs and Croats who are against the erosion of the Dayton Peace Agreement and attempts to centralize the country long ago morphed into an end in themselves for the High Representative, who in his most recent report (S/2018/974, annex) has no qualms about referring to unverified media accounts or simply plucking overreaching conclusions out of the air. For example, he expounds on the alleged rampant corruption and the Bosnian authorities' inability to combat it based on the overtly politicized and completely unsubstantiated decision — which means there should be no place for it in a report — of the United States Department of State to include a Bosnian-Serb parliamentarian, Nikola Špirić, on its restricted list on the eve of the elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The High Representative also speculates about the tragic death of a student, David Dragičević, in a way that portrays what occurred as some sort of systemic flaw in the Republika Srpska judiciary. In our view such assessments are cynical and irresponsible. For those of our colleagues who would like to have a more balanced and factual picture of what is happening in Bosnia and Herzegovina, we once again recommend that they read the report of the Government of Republika Srpska, which according to tradition is drafted in Banja Luka to coincide with today's meeting. We urge the High Representative to abandon his one-sided self-involvement in Bosnia's internal political wrangling and do his proper job, the implementation of the 5+2 plan, which the Office has so far abandoned that this key task is barely mentioned in passing, like some minor side issue.

A clear inadequacy in the High Representative's report, in our view, is the absence, for all practical purposes, of any serious analysis of possible ways to emerge from the crisis situation in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina related to the exclusion of the procedure for filling the upper house of the Parliament from the current version of the Bosnia and Herzegovina election law. The situation is fraught with issues regarding the composition of the House of Peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina's Parliamentary Assembly and the installation of the President and members of the Government of the Federation. We hope that the Office of the High Representative will prepare the relevant completed plans at least by early December, when the Peace Implementation Council Steering Board meets.

As for Russia's approach to a Bosnian settlement, we continue to focus on doing everything possible to facilitate compliance with the Dayton Agreement and to develop a mutually beneficial dialogue with Bosnia and Herzegovina. Our message about the importance of respect for Bosnia and Herzegovina's sovereignty and territorial integrity, as well as the broad powers of the two entities and the equality of the country's three constituent peoples, as provided for in the Peace Agreement, were received in a constructive spirit by all the Bosnian parties during the working visit on 21 September by Sergey Lavrov, Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. We believe that the time for an outside protectorate has passed. The international community's role in Bosnia and Herzegovina should be based on helping Bosnians broaden the scope of their common interests and find their own recipes for compromise solutions to problem issues, including reforming the judicial system and removing the foreign experts from the country's Constitutional Court.

The Bosnian Croats' idea for fine-tuning Bosnia and Herzegovina's electoral system deserves attention. It would provide sufficient guarantees for filling senior leadership positions exclusively with legitimate representatives of each of the country's constituent peoples. Unfortunately, during the recent elections a member of the Presidium of Bosnia and Herzegovina from the Croats was once again elected by votes from the Bosniak majority. It would be desirable for the Bosnians to reach an agreement on how to prevent this practice in the future. It is not acceptable to artificially crank up the pressure on the Republika Srspka in Bosnia and Herzegovina and its legitimately elected leaders. We have a principled objection to unilateral sanctions on Bosnian Serb leaders.

In response to my British colleague, I want to confirm that as a member of the Contact Group of the Steering Board, Russia is committed to Bosnia and Herzegovina's stability and development. But we have not signed on to any obligations to drag the country into Euro-Atlantic structures. That is not our business and it is not the United Kingdom's, either. It is the business of the peoples of Bosnia and Herzegovina. However, we definitely do not agree with the policy of dragging Bosnia and Herzegovina into NATO. Such actions only worsen the tensions in the country and distract the Bosnian parties from working for reform. In this case, the consensus on domestic political issues provided for in the 1995 Peace Agreement cannot be achieved, owing to the principled position of the Bosnian Serbs,

who are not prepared to see alliance-based dividing lines drawn between the Republika Srpska and Serbia.

We stand in solidarity with the views of many European States on the gravity of the threat of the proliferation of radical extremist ideologies in Bosnia and Herzegovina. The activities of the Islamic underground must be eliminated by the country's relevant bodies, including in the context of regional cooperation.

Mr. Alotaibi (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, I would like to join my colleagues in thanking Mr. Valentin Inzko, High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, for his valuable briefing and recent report on the implementation of the Peace Agreement on Bosnia and Herzegovina (S/2018/974, annex). I also want to underline our full support to the High Representative in implementing his mandate and in his efforts to assist the authorities in Bosnia and Herzegovina to overcome the challenges they are facing.

We commend the efforts to maintain stability and unity in Bosnia and Herzegovina for all its racial and cultural components. We also recognize and appreciate the important role of the European Union-led multinational stabilization force in achieving that goal. We also welcome the Council's unanimous adoption today of resolution 2443 (2018), which sends a strong message from the international community to the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina that we are committed to maintaining security and stability there and determined to continue providing the support needed to enhance the sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina, signed more than two decades ago, continues to represent the cornerstone of institutional stability and to serve as a constant reference point for sustainable peace in the country. We are therefore concerned about the ongoing escalation of divisive and inflammatory rhetoric, and we call on all political leaders to prioritize the national interests of the people of Bosnia and Herzegovina above all other considerations and to disregard any narrow racial or political interests that could undermine the chances for progress and stability. They must also work constructively to implement the results of the 7 October elections, including the formation of the Government, in order to make further progress in the political process as soon as possible. The Parliament must also intensify its efforts to adopt new legislation to provide the judicial system with the necessary tools for combating organized crime, corruption, terrorism and extremism, which constitute a direct threat to the rule of law and hinder efforts to achieve economic and social development and accomplish integration with the European Union.

As the report states, these events are happening at a time when limited progress is being made in implementing the 5+2 agenda established for the closure of the Office of the High Representative, especially where the registration of defence property in the Republika Srpska is concerned. In that regard, we reiterate our full support to the Office of the High Representative, pursuant to the Dayton Peace Agreement and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council. We call on him to intensify his efforts to fully implement the plan.

We are concerned about the increase in the number of refugees and displaced persons who returned to Bosnia and Herzegovina since the beginning of the year. Their number had grown to nearly 18,000 by October, whereas last year it stood at 758. Aid agencies have warned that this could potentially lead to thousands of people being left without adequate shelter.

In conclusion, Kuwait underlines the importance of respecting the unity, stability and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. All stakeholders must respect its national Constitution and all the judgments rendered by its judicial bodies to strengthen the pillars of stability in the country. We call on all parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina to make concerted efforts to implement the General Framework Agreement for Peace in Bosnia and Herzegovina and to respect the mandate of the High Representative, pursuant to annex 10 of that Agreement and the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.

Mrs. Cordova Soria (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We thank the High Representative for Bosnia and Herzegovina, Mr. Valentin Inzko, for his briefing.

Taking into account the early renewal of the mandate, we hope that Operation EUFOR Althea and the Office of the High Representative will continue to cooperate closely and play a constructive role in maintaining peace and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Bolivia reiterates its commitment to full respect for the territorial integrity, sovereignty and independence

of Bosnia and Herzegovina. In that regard, we emphasize that safeguarding them requires that its Constitution and the decisions rendered by the judiciary be respected, in accordance with the rule of law. We also call on political leaders and all parties to refrain from using rhetoric that promotes the division of the country.

With regard to recent events, we commend the holding of general elections in October and welcome the fact that they took place in an atmosphere of calm. However, we are concerned that the parties did not reach an agreement on electoral reform. We therefore call on them to work together in an inclusive environment and to respect the Dayton Peace Agreement, which remains the legal basis and benchmark for stability and the peaceful settlement of disputes among the parties.

We also welcome the adoption of the amendments to the criminal procedure code, a joint endeavour that demonstrates the commitment of the Government of Bosnia and Herzegovina to continue undertaking the necessary reforms in order to promote the country's stability and contribute to the initiatives aimed at achieving the development and stability they seek. We therefore encourage them to focus on those aspects and to intensify their efforts in implementing the 5+2 plan as a prerequisite for the closure of the Office of the High Representative.

Despite those advances, certain challenges remain with regard to the political environment. We call on political leaders to pursue dialogue and take consensual action. The challenges should not be an obstacle that threatens the stability of the country. We urge all parties to put the interests of their people before particular political or ethnic interests.

Similarly, we call on local authorities, the international community and all regional, subregional and United Nations agencies to intensify efforts to support the thousands of refugees who have applied for asylum throughout the year, especially with the coming of winter, since many do not have adequate accommodation.

Finally, we encourage the entire population in Bosnia and Herzegovina to live together in harmony by overcoming the divisions of the past and putting shared development first. In that regard, we urge the international community to take a neutral and equitable approach in considering the concerns of all parties with a view to achieving lasting stability.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

At the outset, I thank High Representative Inzko for his briefing.

Bosnia and Herzegovina is a major country in the Balkans. General elections were held there recently. Maintaining the peace, stability and development in Bosnia and Herzegovina is in the common interests of the region and of the international community at large.

China respects the independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, as well as the choice made by its people for the future of their country. We support the peaceful coexistence and common development of the various ethnic groups in Bosnia and Herzegovina. We hope that they will commit to dialogue and consultation to seek common understanding, implement the Dayton Peace Agreement, promote economic development and achieve greater progress in nation-building so as to ensure that the dividends of peace and development are shared by all.

The international community should increase its support for the economic development of the country and create favourable conditions for achieving national reconciliation and lasting peace. The international community should pay special attention to the views and concerns of all affected parties in Bosnia and Herzegovina and take a balanced and prudent approach. China welcomes the efforts made by High Representative Inzko in facilitating the political process in the country and hopes that he will continue to play a constructive role in the implementation of the Dayton Agreement, in accordance with his mandate.

China supports the Council's adoption of resolution 2443 (2018), which renewed the mandate of the European Union-led Operation Althea. We hope that the European Union force will continue to play a positive role in maintaining security and stability in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Together with the rest of the international community, China is ready to do its part in helping Bosnia and Herzegovina achieve long-term peace, development and prosperity.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Mr. Dronjic (Bosnia and Herzegovina): As this is the first time that I am addressing the Council, allow me to begin on a personal note by expressing my feeling of pride and humility, for there is no greater honour for a career diplomat than to represent his country at the United Nations, and especially at a Security Council meeting.

I would like to congratulate China on assuming the presidency for the month of November and wish you, Mr. President, success in your endeavours.

As the Council is aware, on 7 October general elections took place in my country. The results of the elections have still not been declared official by the Central Electoral Commission. Pending the official confirmation of the results, the newly elected members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina will be sworn in and take office on 20 November, in two weeks. According to the Constitution of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Presidency is responsible for the country's foreign policy, which requires the approval by consensus of public statements made on behalf of the Presidency at international organizations and their bodies. As this is a transitional period, the outgoing members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina could not reach consensus at this stage on the substance of the statement to be delivered at this meeting. Therefore, in my personal capacity, I can only thank Mr. Inzko for his twentieth report (S/2018/974, annex) and his briefing today.

I would also like to thank the members of the Security Council for adopting the resolution on the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina and extending the mandate of the European Union-led stabilization force, Operation Althea, for an additional period of 12 months (resolution 2443 (2018)). I note that, in spite of some difficulties, the resolution deems that the security environment in Bosnia and Herzegovina remains calm and stable.

Furthermore, I would like to thank the European Union for allocating €7.2 million in grants to support Bosnia and Herzegovina in the area of migration and border management.

In addition, I would like to thank the Government of the Netherlands and the United Nations Development Programme for granting $245,400 for the EXPLODE+ project, which will help to dispose of the ammunition surplus and further contribute to the security of the population in the country and the region.

In conclusion, I sincerely hope that the newly elected members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina will find the modus operandi that will enable them to overcome situations like this one and spare me from being put in a somewhat awkward position.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the observer of the European Union.

Mr. Vale de Almeida: I would like to share with the Security Council the conclusions reached by the European Union (EU).

The European Union reiterates its unequivocal commitment to its perspective on Bosnia and Herzegovina as a single, united and sovereign country. Following the elections on 7 October and recalling the conclusions reached in June, the European Union expects all leaders to engage constructively on the formation of Government at all levels, which is in the interests of all citizens. The European Union recalls that it expects the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina to prioritize taking forward the reforms that are needed for the country to advance along its EU path, while ensuring the full and effective implementation of the reform agenda.

In that context, the European Union welcomes the continued presence of Operation Althea, which, in the follow-up of the 2017 strategic review, has refocused on its core mandate, while retaining the elements of capacity-building and training that are deemed still necessary and phasing out the other elements that are no longer relevant. In that context, as part of the overall EU strategy for Bosnia and Herzegovina, the European Union confirms its readiness at this stage to continue the executive military mandate of Operation Althea to support Bosnia and Herzegovina's authorities in order to maintain the safe and secure environment under a renewed United Nations mandate.

The European Union looks forward to the presentation of the next strategic review in 2019 as a basis for discussion with member States on the tasks of the European Union-led peacekeeping force and options for the future of Operation Althea, while also bearing in mind the need to support Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress in its EU integration process and taking into account the security situation on the ground. The European Union recognizes the importance of the continued coordination of the European Union-led Operation Althea with other international actors on the ground. The European Union at the same time continues

to urge the authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the support of the international community, to accelerate its efforts to address the disposal of excess ammunition, weapons and explosive devices, as well as demining and other outstanding issues.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Serbia.

Mr. Milanović (Serbia): Bilateral cooperation with neighbours has always been the linchpin of Serbia's approach to foreign policy. It has considered it catalytic for a new type of relations of a higher quality in the Western Balkans and the whole of South-East Europe. That is particularly true of Bosnia and Herzegovina, our next-door neighbour and one of my country's closest partners. The endeavour has been motivated not only by immediate and practical needs but also by larger considerations, such as restoring confidence and achieving reconciliation, both inside and outside Bosnia and Herzegovina, and promoting the aspirations of both countries to join the European Union.

Serbia is a guarantor of the Dayton Peace Agreement, which was instrumental in putting an end to the tragic conflicts in Bosnia and Herzegovina more than 20 years ago. The Agreement also laid the foundation for the peaceful and stable future of its peoples and, very important, for their reconciliation. It is our firm belief that that Agreement also continues to be the basis of Bosnia and Herzegovina's progress in the future.

As a staunch advocate of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of States in the conduct of international relations, my country has also been guided by that principle in its respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina. The development and stability of that country within the framework defined by the Dayton Agreement has always been of the utmost importance to Serbia, given that Bosnia and Herzegovina is also home to 1.5 million Serbs. After all, it is only through political stability and economic development that the country can ensure progress to all of its constituent peoples and become a prosperous country and reliable partner of the region.

More than two decades after the signing of the Dayton Agreement and the establishment of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a sovereign independent State, the key role of dialogue and consensus has been paramount in addressing all of the issues among the country's three constituent peoples and two entities. Those are just as important now — at a time of reforms, the pursuit of European Union membership criteria and the implementation of the required standards in the process of European integration — as they have ever been. We trust and believe that Bosnia and Herzegovina's political leaders have the will and resolve to address those issues through dialogue and that they will reach consensus to the benefit of all its peoples, who have a great stake in the well-being of the country.

Different opinions have been bandied about of late on Bosnia and Herzegovina vis-à-vis various questions, one of which pertains to the election law and its possible amendment. Serbia considers that those are internal questions that are best resolved through agreements among political actors within the existing legal system, in a constructive atmosphere and with mutual respect. On 7 October, however, general elections were held in Bosnia and Herzegovina. It is expected that Government institutions will soon be established and that they will assume their responsibilities in the interests of all of Bosnia and Herzegovina's citizens.

Serbia will remain an eager and reliable partner in achieving ever-more dynamic cooperation in the interests of both countries. We continue to invite dialogue at all levels and promote bilateral relations. Regular contacts have also been maintained at the working level and concrete questions requiring joint efforts have been identified. Those questions are also expected to be addressed upon the completion of the electoral process and the establishment of new institutions. In that connection, Serbia stands ready not only to maintain its level of cooperation but also improve it, together with the central authorities of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and to intensify its relations with the Republika of Srpska and conduct those relations in a transparent way, in accordance with the Dayton Agreement, and to expand cooperation with the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Serbia continues to be interested in furthering economic cooperation with Bosnia and Herzegovina, especially in the fields of investment, joint ventures, energy and infrastructure, among others. The trade exchange between the two countries is robust and increasing; it is expected to reach the €2 billion mark by the end of this year. Having invested over €1 billion, Serbia is one of the largest investors in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Consolidation rather than enlargement may be the ongoing priority of the European Union. We in the Western Balkans, however, have been emboldened by the messages from Brussels that the continuation of the policy of enlargement in our region is a stable process and that new regional memberships are even being envisaged before 2025. Serbia is ready to share its experience on the integration process and with respect to the negotiation chapters available to Bosnia and Herzegovina. We wish our neighbour and partner success in its reform and accession processes.

Serbia is one of the strongest proponents of regional cooperation. Political and economic stability is in the common interests of all of us in South-East Europe. Relentless in its efforts to create even better conditions to bring about economic growth and increase the living standards of the population of the region, my country will not be deterred by occasional divergent and disruptive messages, which we believed belonged to the past. Instead, we shall continue to work hard towards promoting stability, development and good-neighbourliness in the region, particularly with Bosnia and Herzegovina, with the aim of bringing about prosperity and a better future on both sides of the Drina River.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to the representative of Croatia.

Mr. Drobnjak (Croatia): Croatia welcomes this opportunity to discuss the situation in Bosnia and Herzegovina. At the outset, I would like to welcome the High Representative, Mr. Valentin Inzko, and thank him for his report (S/2018/974, annex) and briefing today.

High Representative Inzko pointed out in his report that the Dayton Agreement guarantees the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Bosnia and Herzegovina, the internal constitutional position of the entities and that three constituent peoples are equal. That should be our point of departure for today's debate.

As the only European Union member State neighbouring Bosnia and Herzegovina, and one of its main trade and investment partners, as well as a signatory of the Dayton Peace Agreement, Croatia has a special responsibility and interest in the overall well-being and stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Relations with Bosnia and Herzegovina are therefore one of Croatia's foreign-policy priorities.

Croatia would like to see Bosnia and Herzegovina as a member of the European Union and NATO and as a country where genuine institutional and political equality among three constituent peoples — Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs — and all citizens is not only guaranteed on paper but implemented in practice as well.

At the previous Council meeting on this matter in May, Croatia cautioned that the period ahead of us would be of key importance for the future development of Bosnia and Herzegovina (see S/PV.8248). On 7 October, general elections in Bosnia and Herzegovina were held in an overall orderly manner and without major incident. We note that the elections were assessed as genuinely competitive by international observers.

However, we have witnessed that in those elections the fundamental principle of the full equality of three constituent peoples was not respected. Once again, in the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, a more numerous constituent people chose the representative of the smaller one. Contrary to the Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitution and democratic standards, Croats were deprived of the opportunity to elect their member of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. That runs contrary to the Dayton Peace Agreement. It will not contribute to overcoming the legacy of the past or to the better functioning of the country, and neither will it strengthen the democratic standards and respect for the rights of all citizens. Quite to the contrary, that misuse of the election process has the potential to further burden relations among peoples and lead to the loss of trust among ordinary citizens in democratic institutions. Nothing could jeopardize the future of Bosnia and Herzegovina more than creating such misbalances among constituent peoples.

Croatia has continuously pointed out, including through our statements in this very Chamber, the complexity of the political and legal fabric in Bosnia and Herzegovina, which requires constant attention and carefully designed solutions. Regrettably, it seems that on too many occasions there has not been enough understanding and willingness to appropriately address the crucial problems of Bosnia and Herzegovina.

As we emphasized in our statement in May, the Constitutional Court of Bosnia and Herzegovina confirmed that the legitimate and proportional representation of three constituent peoples at all levels is the overarching principle enshrined in the Constitution

of Bosnia and Herzegovina. Croatia fully respects the constitutional framework of Bosnia and Herzegovina as a federal State in which the three constituent peoples, along with the others and all citizens, should be equal at all political and administrative levels.

The pending reform of the election law and all further institutional reforms in Bosnia and Herzegovina should respect that fact. It is of key importance to embark on reform of the election law without delay in order to avoid possible similar electoral engineering in the future. By the same token, the latest election results need to be implemented in line with the Constitutional Court decision on legitimate and proportional representation, whether that is done based on an ad hoc solution or a permanent solution.

The refusal to implement the decision of the Constitutional Court on the reform of the election law jeopardizes the stability of Bosnia and Herzegovina, leaving open space for further political manipulations. It cannot be overstated: the principle of the equality of Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs represents the very foundation on which Bosnia and Herzegovina is built.

We now expect that all political leaders in Bosnia and Herzegovina will assume their responsibilities and engage in the formation of the parliaments and Governments at all levels, by working constructively together, in the interests of the constituent peoples and all citizens of their country. In that respect, finding a domestic solution to enable the formation of the Federation House of Peoples and other political institutions dependent upon its formation, as required by Bosnia and Herzegovina Constitutional Court rulings, is of the utmost importance. Other election-related issues, including provisions for holding local elections in Mostar and the Bosnia and Herzegovina presidency, should also be immediately addressed.

As the strongest supporter and advocate of Bosnia and Herzegovina's stability, prosperity and territorial integrity, Croatia will continue to support Bosnia and Herzegovina as a sovereign and united country, at the European and international levels. Its future depends on the ability of three constituent peoples to embark together on a progressive and modern platform that embraces the highest democratic standards of legitimate political representation and to work together towards the country's institutional stability. That institutional stability is crucial for Bosnia and Herzegovina to meet in full its obligations arising from the European integration process.

Croatia has always been ready to assist Bosnia and Herzegovina in improving its institutional and administrative capacity and fulfilling all the requirements on the path towards integration into the European Union. We encourage our friend and neighbour to proceed without delay with the reforms in many fields, including the judiciary, the fight against corruption, economic reforms, efficient border management, as well as the fight against political radicalism and elements of religious extremism. Advancement in those processes is not only the best investment in the country's future, but also a way to help it overcome difficult burdens of the past.

Taking into account the political and security situation on the ground and the importance of maintaining a safe and secure environment, Croatia voices its support for the European Union's Operation Althea and the mandate entrusted to it by the Council.

Croatia strongly encourages the three new members of the Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina to work in the interests of their country, with particular sensitivity for the constituent peoples they represent, but also to rise above entity-focused and nationalist politics and reach out to all citizens. We expect the Presidency and the new Governments to uphold the common principles of the rule of law, respect for diversity and the commitment to lasting reconciliation, in a true European spirit.

Finally, as the strongest supporter and advocate of Bosnia and Herzegovina's stability, prosperity and territorial integrity, Croatia advocates, and will continue to do so, for a strong and permanent focus on Bosnia and Herzegovina at the European and international levels, this Chamber included. A sovereign, peaceful, stable and prosperous Bosnia and Herzegovina — a multiethnic country of three equal constituent peoples and all citizens — was, is and should remain our strategic goal.

The meeting rose at noon.

United Nations S/PV.8393

Security Council

Seventy-third year

Provisional

8393rd meeting
Tuesday, 6 November 2018, 3 p.m.
New York

President:	Mr. Ma Zhaoxu	(China)
Members:	Bolivia (Plurinational State of)	Mr. Inchauste Jordán
	Côte d'Ivoire	Mr. Ipo
	Equatorial Guinea	Mr. Sipaco Ribala
	Ethiopia	Ms. Guadey
	France	Mrs. Gueguen
	Kazakhstan	Mr. Temenov
	Kuwait	Mr. Bourisly
	Netherlands	Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren
	Peru	Mr. Tenya
	Poland	Ms. Wronecka
	Russian Federation	Mr. Polyanskiy
	Sweden	Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Mr. Clay
	United States of America	Mr. Cohen

Agenda

United Nations peacekeeping operations

Police Commissioners

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The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

United Nations peacekeeping operations

Police Commissioners

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): In accordance with rule 39 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the following briefers to participate in this meeting: Mr. Alexandre Zouev, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions in the Department of Peacekeeping Operations; Ms. Unaisi Bolatolu-Vuniwaqa, Police Commissioner of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan; Mr. Awalé Abdounasir, Police Commissioner of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo; Mr. Serge Therriault, Police Commissioner of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti; and Ms. Tuesday Reitano of the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The intention of this meeting is for us to be as interactive as we were during the same briefing in November 2017 (see S/PV.8086) and during our dialogue with the Force Commanders. We are looking forward to questions from Council members to the Commissioners, and from the Commissioners to the Council.

I now give the floor to Mr. Zouev.

Mr. Zouev: I would like to thank the Security Council for convening this briefing on the role of United Nations policing in peacekeeping operations. I am especially pleased to be joined by our Police Commissioners working in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Haiti and South Sudan.

This year, we celebrate 70 years of United Nations peacekeeping, and this annual event is an opportunity to reaffirm the vital role that the United Nations police play in linking the United Nations work, from prevention to peacekeeping to peacebuilding. Today we will hear several examples of how United Nations police officers perform their mandated tasks while advancing the Secretary-General's vision of a transformed United Nations police that is people-centred, mission-oriented, modern, agile, mobile and flexible, specialized and definitely rights-based.

(*spoke in French*)

Central to that effort is gender-responsive policing. As Ms. Unaisi Bolatolu-Vuniwaqa, Police Commissioner of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), will tell us in a few moments, a more reactive approach to gender parity in policing makes us more efficient at what we do because it helps us to reach the whole population — men, women, boys and girls. Recruiting more women police officers can support our efforts in that regard. In addition, women police officers can help to mentor and inspire future women police leaders, increase access to justice for women and children at risk, and improve information-gathering and analysis by building bridges to vulnerable groups. If we are to reach our full potential, we must bring more women police officers into the fold.

In line with the Secretary-General's system-wide strategy on gender parity, Security Council resolutions on women and peace and security and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations gender-parity strategy, the United Nations police have stepped up efforts to increase the participation of women police officers. More specifically, the Police Division has developed an action plan that sets out specific targets for female representation in contracted and seconded posts in field missions and at Headquarters by December 2028. The efforts of the Police Division are already bearing fruit. The number of female heads of police components in United Nations peacekeeping operations has reached 40 per cent. Increases in the number of female personnel at all levels of professional posts have also been noted.

Unfortunately, despite those gains, women continue to be underrepresented in senior-level posts with the United Nations police. To address that situation, the Police Division has organized female senior police officer command development and training courses. These courses have made it possible to identify over 140 female officers eligible for the aforementioned posts. That initiative is part of the Police Division's ongoing work to establish a roster of women and men police candidates for senior posts.

Police components in field missions are expected to develop and implement their own gender-parity strategies. Shortly, Commissioner Bolatolu-Vuniwaqa will share more details with the Council about UNMISS and the efforts of her team and the Mission to

make progress on the issue of gender parity within the framework of her protection of civilians mandate.

(*spoke in Spanish*)

It is also important for us to recruit officials with the ability to connect with the local communities by using their language. The ability to communicate effectively remains a crucial aspect of our work. That includes being able to communicate our mission and the intentions behind our actions. I appreciate the commitment of Member States to multilingualism, and I ask that they ensure that we always have police officials who are genuinely centred on people and the communities where they serve, including when it comes to how we are able to communicate.

(*spoke in English*)

Secondly, we will hear how United Nations police components are increasingly called upon to assist their host-State counterparts in addressing serious and organized crime. The growing risks posed by such crime have been recognized at the highest levels of the Organization, as evidenced by various resolutions of the Council and reports of the Secretary-General. It is no exaggeration to say that it strikes at the very heart of the United Nations core business. Often characterized by porous borders, scarce socioeconomic opportunities, weak State authority and prevailing corruption, countries in conflict or emerging from conflict are particularly vulnerable to organized crime. By compromising the integrity of public officials and institutions through corruption, intimidation and violence, organized criminal groups erode the State's long-term capacity to provide for the public good. That hurts national dialogue and reconciliation, entrenches positions of power and endangers the entire peacebuilding process.

Historically, organized crime has been a matter for the police, while the military responded to violent conflict. The rise of asymmetric threats and non-State actors has blurred the lines between the two. For example, in West Africa and the Sahel, routes for the illegal trafficking and smuggling of people, weapons and drugs go through areas controlled by terrorist groups, with smugglers and traffickers paying for the right of passage. In Nigeria, Boko Haram has been involved in the trafficking of drugs, people and natural resources. This new normal — where networks are looser and alliances of convenience are forged — requires a holistic response rooted in a coherence of practice and approach.

Our police components in the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mali, among others, assist their host-State counterparts in setting up criminal intelligence systems and utilize modern technology to prevent and investigate serious and organized crime. They also help to improve host-State police interactions with the public through community-oriented policing initiatives that have proved successful in Liberia, Abyei and other mission settings, thereby contributing to situational awareness and early warning.

Commissioner Abdounasir will share more details about the support of the police component of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the Congolese authorities in this area.

(*spoke in Russian*)

As we demand more from our police officers, we must for our part do more to create the necessary conditions to ensure their safe, smooth work, to the extent possible in these challenging environments. The report authored by former United Nations Force Commander, Lieutenant General Carlos Alberto dos Santos Cruz, entitled *Improving security of United Nations peacekeepers*, laid bare some of our shortcomings in this area, and we are committed to correcting them. As one example, the Police Division has been taking steps to standardize the assessment and evaluation of formed police units to improve operational readiness and to ensure the proper performance of their tasks.

Lastly today, we will look at strengthening the rule of law through police reform. I would like to quote the research conducted by Chuck Call and Michael Barnett of 1999, as published in *Peacebuilding and Police Reform*:

> "[T]he transition from civil war to civil society is inextricably linked to the development of civilian... police forces that... uphold the rule of law and help to maintain order with the minimum" — I emphasize "minimum" — "amount of force".

We have seen many positive examples of this transition, for instance in Bosnia and Herzegovina, El Salvador, Sierra Leone and other countries.

Almost exactly one year ago, our peacekeeping operation in Haiti transitioned to a rule-of-law mission. The United Nations police — as the largest component, with almost 1,300 uniformed personnel — is the lynchpin in our effort to improve Haiti's rule of law institutions and promote human rights in Haiti. In this way we are closing the circle. The United Nations police has helped to design and train a new police force in Haiti, while the mandate of the very first United Nations operation included from the outset the task of launching police development. We are all interested in hearing from Commissioner Therriault from the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti about how police reform efforts are helping to strengthen the rule of law in the country.

(*spoke in English*)

The Action for Peacekeeping initiative launched by our Secretary-General aims to refocus peacekeeping on realistic expectations, make peacekeeping missions stronger and safer, and mobilize greater support for political solutions and for well-structured, well-equipped and well-trained forces. It is an acknowledgement that politics and peacekeeping are intertwined. United Nations police already know that there can be no such distinction, not when organized crime groups can infiltrate and influence the highest levels of Government and not when they remain some of the greatest spoilers of peace.

We recently shared with our Member States the Action for Peacekeeping Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations, which is an affirmation of collective responsibility among the Secretariat, partner organizations and Member States in their various capacities as peacekeeping host countries, Security Council members, troop, police and financial contributors and donors. As of 5 October, 150 Member States had endorsed the Declaration. The breadth of this high-level political support is a strong endorsement of the Department as we move forward. This gathering of our heads of police components will provide critical impetus to the realization of the ideals behind Action for Peacekeeping in the field.

As part of the Action for Peacekeeping consultations, we heard Member States loud and clear. They would like to see peacekeeping forge greater unity of purpose and work together across the United Nations system to ensure greater coherence. United Nations policing has helped to lead the way in this regard, as it has been a founding member of the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections, an arrangement that has helped us to break down silos and work towards greater horizontal cooperation among all pillars of the United Nations.

In conclusion, this event presents us with an opportunity to take stock. Over the past year, the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and the Department of Field Support have completed eight independent strategic reviews of different peacekeeping operations. The reviews have proved impactful in supporting the increased efficiency and effectiveness of operations by both the streamlining of functions and the realignment of resource allocation.

The reviews will help us to strengthen the recommendations of the Secretary-General ahead of the deliberations of the Security Council on mandate renewals. This is absolutely essential if the United Nations police are to fulfil their role in not only keeping the peace, but also creating the space for political dialogue and preventive diplomacy. It is my hope that today's discussion will help us to further mobilize international support for a United Nations police service that is built for purpose and built for the future.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Zouev for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Bolatolu-Vuniwaqa.

Ms. Bolatolu-Vuniwaqa: Allow me to start by thanking the Security Council for dedicating this meeting to United Nations policing.

Affording protection to civilians is central to the implementation of the United Nations Mission in the Republic of South Sudan (UNMISS) mandate. Since the establishment of the protection of civilian sites in 2013, the UNMISS police component has adopted various approaches that have enhanced protection for around 200,000 internally displaced persons living within these sites. In this regard, United Nations police (UNPOL) employs gender-responsive policing as one of the key approaches towards the special protection needs of girls, women, boys and men, and takes into account gender considerations in delivering on its mandated tasks.

To enhance the protective environment through physical protection and to preserve the civilian character of the sites, UNPOL officers regularly conduct search-and-cordon operations, confiscate and

destroy weapons, detain criminals and expel suspected combatants. UNPOL officers also visit checkpoints alongside the perimeter and regularly engage with the host State police, organize firewood and market escorts, and undertake random patrols. We mediate in minor conflicts, monitor and report human rights violations, raise awareness, promote reconciliation and recovery, and keep public order through the deployment of formed police units. These activities allow UNPOL officers to maintain a very visible and proactive presence, while ensuring that women and girls are engaged and consulted and that their needs and perspectives are included in all prevention and protection efforts.

Recently, UNMISS piloted new measures that enhance protection and promote confidence and trust between UNPOL officers and the community, as part of its community-oriented policing initiatives. The protection-of-civilians site in Juba is divided into different zones. Each zone has been assigned dedicated UNPOL officers who are easily recognizable, approachable and accountable. Additionally, the Mission is exploring the establishment of police posts inside the protection-of-civilians site to further facilitate access for civilians to UNPOL at all times. To assist the displaced and vulnerable population in areas beyond the protection-of-civilian sites, UNPOL officers conduct regular high-visibility patrols. Such patrolling is aimed at increasing the confidence of civilians residing in these areas and has opened new sources of information.

Notwithstanding these efforts, sexual and gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, remains pervasive throughout the country and continues to be a challenge. The latest report of the Secretary-General on conflict-related sexual violence (S/2018/250) reports 196 cases in 2017. The findings of the Commission on Human Rights in South Sudan and recent reports of sexual violence perpetrated against children are deeply concerning and alarming.

The police component of UNMISS champions a gender-responsive policing in how it implements the protection of civilians mandate set out in resolution 2406 (2018). This approach embraces a differentiated and special protection needs of girls, women, boys and men and takes into account gender considerations as a cross-cutting issue throughout its mandated tasks to ensure operational effectiveness and efficiency. A specialized protection team on gender, children and vulnerable persons protection has been deployed to the Mission to assist and advise in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of initiatives aimed at combating sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence, as well as to coordinate efforts with relevant United Nations agencies, host-State Government departments, international and national non-governmental organizations, women's organizations and community-based organizations.

The UNMISS police component works closely with the Police Division on restructuring the current specialized team into an enhanced sexual and gender-based violence specialized police team. This new team will remain embedded in the Mission headquarters but will adopt a mobile approach, covering protection-of-civilians sites in Malakal, Bor, Wau and Bentiu, as well as other areas of concern.

To reinforce the efforts of UNPOL in addressing sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence, a technical working group was established, comprising the South Sudan National Police Service and Immigration, the National Prisons Service and the South Sudan judiciary. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), along with UNMISS components including the Office of Rule of Law and Security Institutions, the Human Rights Division, the Gender Affairs Unit, the Child Protection Unit and the Office of the Senior Women's Protection Adviser are members of this working group. Initial discussions within the working group have outlined the need to build the capacities of the Special Protection Units of the South Sudan National Police Service in addressing sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence. This will also include the need for the creation of adequate support mechanisms for survivors, including a fully functioning referral pathway.

UNPOL is also supporting UNDP in the development of a sexual and gender-based violence investigation manual intended for the South Sudan National Police Service, the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs and the South Sudan judiciary. Through the Global Focal Point for Police, Justice and Corrections, UNPOL support for the South Sudan National Police Service will continue to be strengthened through the incorporation of a gender-responsive approach.

UNMISS police recently deployed a mixed formed police unit (FPU), comprising 50 per cent women police officers. These police personnel provide security to unarmed individual police officers

conducting community-oriented policing activities, such as awareness-raising and fostering community watch groups, in addition to providing force protection in situations where women and children converge in large numbers. Through participation in coordinated patrols, UNPOL officers support protection actors such as child protection officers and women's protection advisers, and facilitate information gathering through specialized policing skills. FPU elements provide security and protection to displaced women leaders at national and subnational level consultations as part of the resolution 1325 (2000) Global Open Day on Women, Peace and Security initiative. This enables the inclusive and representative participation of women from all sections of South Sudan.

Furthermore, evidence indicates that women police officers and mixed formed police units act as catalysts that promote confidence, encourage survivors of sexual violence to report incidents, and enable civilians to share strategic information that contributes to the early warning system of the Mission. The recently revised standard operating procedure on assessment of the operational capability of formed police units prioritizes the deployment of gender-integrated FPUs and calls for a minimum of 32 women officers, including at the command level. This positive development meets one of the 10 strategic areas agreed amongst the Heads of police components during last year's United Nations Police Week Conference.

I am pleased to share that, as of today, UNMISS has the largest combined deployment of women police personnel in any peacekeeping mission, including both individual police officers and formed police units. Collectively, women officers comprise 22 per cent of the Mission's police component, including 33 per cent women in professional police positions. The UNPOL Women's Network empowers women police officers within the police component and inspires women officers in the South Sudan National Police Service. In line with the vision of the Secretary-General's gender-parity strategy and recently endorsed Department of Peacekeeping Operations uniformed personnel gender-parity strategy, I intend to continue collaborating with the Police Division to further engage police-contributing countries in deploying additional women police officers.

The UNMISS police component remains committed to protecting civilians, preventing sexual and gender-based violence, and building confidence among civilians. We will continue in our efforts to foster a secure environment for the voluntary return of the displaced population, while ensuring that all policing activities complement and strengthen the overall efforts of the Mission.

In conclusion, I would like to thank Security Council members for their continued support.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Ms. Bolatolu-Vuniwaqa for her briefing.

I now give the floor to Mr. Abdounasir.

Mr. Abdounasir (*spoke in French*): It is an honour for me to stand before the Council to speak about the fight against organized crime in the context of peacekeeping missions on the occasion of the twelfth United Nations Police Week.

First of all, I would like to emphasize that organized crime has become an international scourge that threatens the stability of many countries, thereby undermining international peace and security. In most countries affected by organized crime, weakened State institutions responsible for enforcing the rule of law are becoming increasingly powerless in the face of security challenges, giving free rein to criminal networks to engage in smuggling and all kinds of trafficking, including drugs, the illicit trade in minerals, money-laundering and the financing of terrorism. In order to support countries that have fallen victim to this phenomenon, from 2000 to 2017 the Security Council adopted 1,100 resolutions urging Member States and the relevant United Nations agencies to develop and implement relevant strategies and action plans to support fellow Member States in the fight against organized crime.

Faced with this scourge, the international community, through the Security Council, has strengthened its actions in the various countries affected, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where peacekeeping missions have been deployed since 1999. The mandates of these missions have included the protection of civilians, the restoration of State authority and the fight against armed groups.

As the Council is aware, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, a vast territory of 2,345,409 square kilometres, shares 10,292 kilometres of border with nine other countries. The porous nature of its borders favours the circulation of and trafficking in arms, to the benefit of criminal groups. It is in this context that

the United Nations has, through the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), focused its efforts to assist the Democratic Republic of the Congo to better combat organized crime and the activities of armed groups. The MONUSCO police component, which has been mandated to accompany the Congolese National Police, has developed strategies to prevent and combat organized crime.

In terms of prevention, MONUSCO police have developed a tripartite strategy, working alongside Congolese National Police units by providing highly qualified officers; strengthening operational capacities by training specialized services; and establishing a mechanism for monitoring procedures. In line with that preventive approach, in 2017 and 2018 the MONUSCO police component undertook capacity-building in forensics and organized crime for 2,711 Congolese National Police officers, which involved the use of new technologies in the collection of fingerprints and evidence for the preservation of crime scenes.

With regard to the fight against organized crime in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in support of military justice and the Department of Police, MONUSCO has set up a criminal network task force led by the police component and composed of investigators and analysts who continuously assist the local police in investigating the financing of armed groups and the illicit trafficking of natural resources. That ongoing support has resulted in the identification and arrest of some perpetrators of criminal acts. In the same vein, in 2016 the Mission, through the United Nations Police (UNPOL), established a support unit for structures combating organized crime composed of specialist UNPOL experts and investigators, which has provided technical and operational support to the Congolese National Police in nine major organized crime investigations.

In order to overcome instability, Governments in most countries weakened by multifaceted crises, including organized crime, systematically seek to militarize their efforts, while it would be more appropriate to strengthen the judicial system through a criminal justice system with a more transparent and accountable law enforcement approach. I welcome the provision of support for State structures to combat organized crime as one of the priority objectives in the various mandates of the Security Council. In addition, I would like to underline the commitment of the MONUSCO police to continuing to work towards the implementation of the mandate by setting up performance indicators for units and individual officers.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Abdounasir for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Police Commissioner Therriault.

Mr. Therriault: A capable and accountable police force is a key social and institutional asset for any society. When citizens see themselves in their police, trust their State institutions and see their dignity and safety in good hands, citizens trust each other, the social contract holds and, above all, peace holds.

(*spoke in French*)

United Nations doctrine is positioned to view the role of United Nations Police in the broader context of the rule of law and to ensure that the rule of law and human rights are fully integrated into its activities. Police services are a part of governance that aim to ensure that the rights of all persons, without any distinction, are protected, encouraged and respected and that personnel reflect the communities they serve.

(*spoke in English*)

The greatest comparative advantage of the United Nations Police may lie in the fact that it brings international legitimacy to efforts aimed at developing local police. Through its independence, impartiality, commitment to United Nations values and respect for international human rights standards, it contributes to building local confidence in the police and reaches into all spheres of society to promote the rule of law. The United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH), which is the only peacekeeping mission without a military presence, is a perfect example of that. MINUJUSTH relies on its 295 individual police officers and seven formed police units deployed across the nation to promote safety and security through joint operations with the Haitian National Police as a united and professional critical mass of peace officers.

Among other achievements, that arrangement has enabled the continuous development of the Haitian National Police's public order management and its capacity, under the guidance of collocated international police advisers, to positively impact the security and stability perception, which is undermined when democratic protests turn into violence. In addition, the United Nations Police has the advantage of acting as

part of a larger mission. Thus, it benefits from access to political influence and additional specialized services offered by other mission components.

In accordance with its Strategic Guidance Framework for International Police Peacekeeping and with a view to professionalizing the Haitian National Police, the police component of MINUJUSTH promotes the rule of law in Haiti in consultation with other actors on human rights, community violence reduction, gender and internal control mechanisms, to name a few. In fact, by continuing to support the development of the Haitian National Police General Inspectorate, the United Nations Police ensures that when it withdraws, it will be eventually replaced by a robust oversight mechanism that will be able to maintain internal controls, conduct audits, investigate human rights violations and provide recommendations for continuous improvements and the professionalization of the Haitian National Police.

(*spoke in French*)

In recent years, the fact that the United Nations Police has been an integral part of overall efforts to reform the security and justice systems has also been an advantage because it has enabled missions to address the issue of the rule of law in a more coordinated and comprehensive manner. Police reform has a multiplier effect as a vehicle for stability in every society and plays a central role in all approaches to conflict prevention. For the Haitian National Police, significant progress has been made as a result of the involvement of all stakeholders in the implementation of the reform and development plans from 2005 to 2016 and the implementation of the 2017-2021 strategic plan.

In addition, there are now 15,735 members of the Haitian National Police force, 1,568 of whom are women. That is the police force that will ensure public security throughout the country following the departure of MINUJUSTH. In 2004, when the United Nations Stabilization Mission in Haiti was established, the Haitian National Police had approximately 6,000 officers, which means that over time, and with the support of the United Nations, the Haitian National Police has increased its strength more than twofold.

(*spoke in English*)

Generations of United Nations police officers have served in different missions around the world to build the capacity of host States in preventing conflict and sustaining peace through the increased participation of women in peace operations, sharing their expertise and a policing approach centred on the core notion of a civilian police force built on professionalism, transparency and accountability. Those men and women, working in synergy, have risen to the challenge of supporting police reform in failed and fragile States to empower national authorities to protect their populations and create the conditions for the prevalence of the rule of law.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Mr. Therriault for his briefing.

I now give the floor to Ms. Reitano.

Ms. Reitano: It is a great pleasure and an honour for the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime to address the Security Council today during this briefing on policing in the peacekeeping operations of the United Nations. In this statement, we would like to highlight three conclusions from our research and the experiences of our 350-person network of experts. We hope that those insights can potentially strengthen the strategic response of the Security Council to organized crime in conflict zones.

Our first conclusion, which we think is now broadly accepted, is that organized crime is a global and accelerating phenomenon and a threat to international peace and security. In a collaborative project with INTERPOL and the RHIPTO Norwegian Center for Global Analyses, we analysed over 1,000 major global smuggling and trafficking routes associated with environmental crimes, drugs and people. Those routes and flows represent a confluence of global illicit trade. Not only do they map across contemporary conflicts in Africa, Asia, the Middle East and the Americas, but there also is often a link between those illicit trafficking routes and international terrorism.

Based on our field research, we estimate that in the region of $31.5 billion-worth of illicit profits are generated annually in conflict areas. While there is obviously margin for error with this figure — as with any estimate of the illicit economy — all evidence suggests that the scale of illicit markets is staggering and that their intersection with contemporary conflict is incontrovertible.

The sources of revenue that fund non-State armed and terrorist groups are diversifying. They are increasingly based on criminal activities, and that phenomenon is sustaining conflicts worldwide.

The illegal exploitation and taxation of gold, oil and other natural resources are sources of income that are overtaking traditional threats to finance sectors, such as kidnapping for ransom and drug trafficking.

Our second conclusion, however, is that these non-State armed groups and combatants collectively receive only a very small fraction of the sum total of all illicit finance flows generated by organized crime in or near conflicts. By far the larger share of the $31.5 billion goes to political actors at all levels and associated transnational criminal networks. These, therefore, are the main beneficiaries of instability, violence and lack of State capacity for enforcement, and they thus retain an interest in the perpetuation of conflict.

The nature of organized crime activity varies from conflict zone to conflict zone and criminal groups exist on a spectrum from loose networks that can include Government and external criminal actors to hierarchically organized armed groups that engage in criminal activity to sustain themselves and project their influence. In some cases, such networks may seek to control key transport nodes such as ports and landing strips. For others, the control of territory itself is essential, as it allows them to tax both licit and illicit activities in what could be termed criminal governance. Combating organized crime must therefore be considered a significant factor in conflict prevention and resolution, reversing ecosystems that enable criminal governance. Where crime thrives, there can be no sustainable peace.

Our third conclusion is that while the Security Council has recognized the growing convergence of criminal activity, illicit markets and conflict, the response across the peacebuilding cycle has not always kept pace. In an analytical exercise undertaken by the Global Initiative, we reviewed each of the 1,113 Council resolutions that were adopted between 2000 and 2017. From that analysis, we found that 35 per cent of those resolutions made reference to some form of organized crime or illicit markets. Significantly, however, we also found that the proportion of such resolutions has been growing. In each of the past five years from 2012 to 2017, more than 60 per cent of the resolutions of the Security Council have mentioned one or more forms of organized criminality.

Yet, we see a strong disconnect between a clear awareness of the problem, on the one hand, and a more limited operational response, on the other. For example, a project by the University of Edinburgh shows that of 1,500 separate peace agreements covering more than 120 countries between 1990 and 2016, only 21 mentioned organized crime. And in mandate design for the Organization's 35 peacekeeping, special political missions and envoys currently in effect, only eight have operational organized crime functions, representing only 23 per cent.

The few peace operations that do have mandates to respond to organized crime tend to address the problem exclusively within the mission's policing function. But what global experience in addressing organized crime has clearly shown us is that while policing is critically important, it cannot alone successfully fight organized crime, address its drivers or mitigate its impact. The policing function needs to be part of an integrated response.

However, as the 2016 external review of United Nations policing observed, in most contexts the police component has been insufficiently integrated with the political and other functions of the peacekeeping missions, and significant underresourcing hampers the division's ability to perform a more integrated function. Furthermore, except in a few recent missions, the United Nations police have been seen as the bedrock of a mission's exit strategy rather than as a critical part of the central planning and peacekeeping functions.

Instead, the way in which criminal actors have become embedded in conflict zones suggests that policing must be a strategic consideration at all stages of a mission's planning and deployment. Even if peace operations are not intended to actively fight crime, they need to be crime-sensitive and ensure that criminal groups do not threaten the security of the mission or become long-term peace spoilers. More regional approaches, including stable neighbouring States, can provide a buffer to respond to the cross-border, transnational threats posed by fragile and conflict-affected countries.

In a peacekeeping setting, the United Nations system as a whole needs better situational awareness of criminal networks, organized crime and the illicit economy in order to provide a basis for policymaking and programming. Expanding the analytical capacities of peace operations by providing information-gathering task forces with sufficient resources is an essential first step towards accomplishing those aims. Integrating a political-economy approach — one that extends into

the political side of mission mandates and encompasses the illicit economy in its considerations — is a second step. A sustainable response must address the often-documented challenge of political actors at all levels who profit from illicit flows. Otherwise there is a risk of rewarding bad behaviour and allowing governance itself to become criminalized.

There is currently no written guidance for peacekeepers or United Nations mission staff that has been prepared or provided by the system with regard to addressing organized crime. Similarly, there is no guidance module on organized crime for the United Nations system disarmament, demobilization and reintegration framework, although one is envisaged. Peacekeeping missions should also be able to draw upon the benefits of the experience of the whole United Nations system in understanding and responding to criminality in a conflict zone, but currently there is no systematic linkage between peacekeeping missions and the specialized agency for organized crime — the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime — or for others with expertise in specific forms of organized criminality.

That may mean, therefore, that peace operations are working without the much-needed understanding of the forms of criminal governance or the criminal ecosystem in which they operate. As a result, they attempt to use structures and strategies designed for dealing with non-State conflict or engaging legitimate political actors without necessarily addressing the way in which organized crime underpins those theatres of operations. A poorly framed response to illicit markets can have highly detrimental impacts on human rights, the legitimacy of some local actors, the protection of civilians and the size and strength of criminal groups themselves. We therefore acknowledge and welcome those instances where senior, highly experienced police officials are working alongside or even replacing their military counterparts, who have traditionally taken a lead role in designing and, thereafter, implementing peacekeeping operations. In a context where peacekeeping is as much about introducing, reintroducing or reinforcing the rule of law as it is about keeping warring factions apart, the role of policing in these missions is critical.

Tackling organized crime in conflict zones is an integral part of tackling organized crime holistically at the global level. The two are closely connected. From the Global Initiative's perspective, there is little doubt that the United Nations system needs a more coherent, streamlined and strategic approach to addressing organized crime and bringing its tools to bear to counter its impact. Counter-crime initiatives need to be linked to and reinforced by interventions in the recovery and development space, which are required to address the socioeconomic underpinnings of the illicit economy.

In conclusion, organized crime is a threat to the three pillars on which the United Nations system is based — human rights, peace and security, and good governance and development. If we are to prevent conflict more effectively and build sustainable peace, then we need a more comprehensive and effective response to organized crime. We therefore urge the Security Council, with its leadership, to move this issue from the margins to the mainstream of the United Nations work, and particularly its work in the field.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank Ms. Reitano for her briefing.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

Mr. Adom (Côte d'Ivoire) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes these exchanges with Mr. Alexandre Zouev, Ms. Tuesday Reitano and the Police Commissioners of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH). We congratulate them and commend them for the remarkable work they carry out in particularly difficult security environments. The relevant briefings that we have just heard, informed by daily experience on the ground, gives us a better idea of the decisive role of the Organization's police forces and the many challenges they face in implementing their mandates.

United Nations peacekeeping operations are not intended to replace the host State authorities, but rather to support them as part of a crisis-exit strategy that is based on an inclusive and credible political process. Each time United Nations peacekeeping operations have engaged with host State authorities and all of the stakeholders in a crisis, dynamic cooperation based on mutual trust and the pursuit of goals that are realistic and consensual has created the conditions for a successful transition, thereby paving the way for lasting peace and stability.

The quality of collaboration among leaders is essential, especially between the police components of peacekeeping missions and all stakeholders in the crisis-resolution processes, primarily the host Government and the local population. That creates the conditions for strong national ownership of United Nations action. It is therefore my delegation's view that that is an crucial, and even indispensable, condition to make the work of the United Nations police force more effective, particularly in the implementation of their obligations within the mandate that has been entrusted to them, namely, the protection of civilians, ensuring free access to justice for women and children and support for the host country in the fight against organized crime.

The fact that United Nations missions are made up of a mosaic of contingents from different cultures and countries could suggest that there would be a negative impact on the perception of their obligations in the context of peacekeeping in difficult environments. The merit of the Force Commanders who have just delivered their briefings therefore lies in their daily efforts to maintain a sufficient level of cohesion and unity of action among the police forces so that, in spite of the many challenges, they can continue to be an effective instrument at the service of the peace continuum.

In that regard, my delegation would like to seek the insight of the Police Commissioner of MINUJUSTH, Mr. Serge Therriault, on the status of the collaboration with the Haitian authorities concerning the capacity-building mandate of the Haitian National Police to help them take ownership of national security. How far along is the process of professionalizing the Haitian National Police in terms of achieving the goals of the MINUJUSTH exit strategy two years from now? Will the transference of tasks and responsibilities be completed within the established time frame? It is imperative that Haitians take ownership of the proposed fundamental reforms and implement them in order to ensure the success of the transition. With regard to the zero-tolerance policy on sexual violence, my delegation seeks clarification on the actions carried out within the framework of the three peacekeeping missions that are the subject of this meeting, with a view to the implementation of that requirement.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to commend the thousands of men and women of the police forces deployed in United Nations missions and pay tribute to the soldiers who have lost their lives. Their sacrifice should lead us to further our efforts to translate into reality the hope of peace and prosperity held by millions of people in those countries.

Mr. Inchauste Jordán (Plurinational State of Bolivia) (*spoke in Spanish*): We are grateful for the briefing by Assistant Secretary-General Alexandre Zoue, and for those by the Police Commissioners of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as that by Ms. Tuesday Reitano.

The United Nations defines police work as a function of governance responsible for the prevention, detection and investigation of crimes, the protection of persons and property and the maintenance of public order and security. Two years ago, the Organization received a report of the Secretary-General (S/2016/952) that included 14 recommendations on the work of the police, which, within the framework of resolution 2185 (2014), stressed the ever-greater importance of police forces for international peace and security. The Secretary-General's approach has made it possible to identify priorities and measures aimed at strengthening the work of the police detachments deployed in the various peacekeeping missions, with the aim of establishing a coherent and adaptable system to tackle new conflict and post-conflict situations.

In addition to assisting in planning transition processes and developing integrated approaches on the rule of law in the countries where they carry out their activities, the work of the police also fulfils a wide range of tasks, including, inter alia, advising on the reform, restructuring and strengthening of police institutions, contributing to the training and mentoring of police forces in countries, law enforcement, providing assistance and security in electoral processes, disarmament and demobilization, community-based policing, patrolling, border management and the fight against transnational organized crime. The role and importance of that work has been demonstrated today in the briefings delivered.

The roles of United Nations police in terms of levels of security are well established in practice and involve the strengthening of local police and Government institutions and access to justice. That is done through the promotion of dialogue and commitment and the creation of a secure environment. However, we believe

that the role of United Nations police is not yet clear with regard to the physical protection of civilians.

We value the efforts of the Organization to ensure that police-contributing countries meet the necessary standards, although there are still challenges regarding deployment, capacity and specific tasks. We believe that those difficulties must be overcome with the improvement of performance-management frameworks in the field, and that is not exclusive to military components, but also covers police and civilian components. On the other hand, within the framework of peacebuilding, it is imperative to reinforce the work of United Nations police with regard to the transition and transfer of full responsibilities to the police in the host State, in addition to ensuring mission exit strategies.

In that understanding, and turning to our region, we commend the role of the police component of MINUJUSTH, which provides operational support to the Haitian National Police in terms of reducing crime and of activities related to law enforcement, having completed the first joint annual review of the Haitian National Police development plan for the period 2017-2021, which focuses on improving the capacity and operational readiness of the National Police in the areas of prevention and response.

We also welcome efforts to promote the incorporation of a gender perspective into United Nations police components, which reaffirms, assures and promotes the equal participation of women in the area of peacekeeping operations, including an active role in prevention, mediation and dialogue in order to achieve solutions on equal terms.

In conclusion, Bolivia reaffirms its support and commitment to peacekeeping operations and is grateful for the work of United Nations personnel, as well as the personnel of police- and troop-contributing countries — men and women who risk their lives every day in order to consolidate a lasting and sustainable peace in fulfilment of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations.

Mr. Tenya (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): We wish to express our gratitude for the convening of this meeting and for the important briefings by Mr. Alexandre Zouev, the Police Commissioners of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) and Ms. Tuesday Reitano. We also wish to highlight the important functions performed by Security Council-mandated police forces, as well as the great potential that their participation in United Nations peace operations represents for the maintenance, consolidation and sustainment of peace in the countries where they are deployed.

We underscore the importance that peacekeeping operations, as appropriate, have in place guidelines for action, specialized administration, recruitment and training systems, capacity-building on human rights — especially on those of women and children — and mechanisms for performance assessment. We also believe that support is often required in countries affected by conflict in order to build and strengthen national and local institutions and capacities that are called upon to restore and maintain security and public order. We therefore underscore the importance of developing close coordination and cooperation with national authorities and local communities, as well as with United Nations country teams. That is so that United Nations policing in peace operations responds to national needs, circumstances and priorities and contributes to local capacity-building, which, in many cases, involves a high level of specialization where required.

That is of the utmost importance — for example, in combating organized crime, as has been pointed out today, which erodes the institutional framework required to sustain peace, is often transnational in scope and, in many cases, favours the development of conflicts and establishes links with terrorism.

In that regard, we would like to highlight the work done by United Nations police and the need to prioritize its action to establish and train local police. We stress that United Nations police have the capacity to build a close relationship with the local population, thereby contributing to conflict prevention, including mediation efforts such as those carried out by UNMISS in South Sudan, as its Police Commissioner mentioned.

We also believe that it is important that law enforcement agencies, as well as the judicial and correctional systems, be trained on the principles and values of justice, including the rule of law and due process. Also, its action must be inclusive and its composition must reflect the country's ethnic, religious and cultural diversity, as appropriate. We stress the need for the police to have the trust of the citizenry and

to invest in its relationship with local communities, in particular with the youth. As Mr. Zouev rightly pointed out, that trust is augmented by the presence of women as part of United Nations policing. That trust is also essential for the proper functioning of the rule of law, early-warning systems, close monitoring and police intelligence. We therefore emphasize the importance of recruiting and training more women as police officers. In that connection, we highlight the efforts made by MINUJUSTH to that end and would like to know whether the expected levels of female participation in that process have been attained.

We underscore the importance that, in order to effectively protect civilians, United Nations police guidelines also define police responsibilities to include preventing and responding to threats of physical violence, as well as the need for adequate training. That means recognizing that the police components of a mission are also responsible for fulfilling their mandates under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations.

I would like to conclude by paying tribute to the thousands of police personnel who carry out complex and important work for peace and security in various missions mandated by the Council in conflict-ridden countries. They have our full support.

Mrs. Gregoire Van Haaren (Netherlands): On behalf of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, I would like to express my sincere thanks to all the briefers — Assistant Secretary-General Zouev, Ms. Reitano and the Police Commissioners of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti (MINUJUSTH) — for their excellent and very concrete briefings. I think they have all highlighted different aspects of United Nations policing that are quite relevant to the discussion today. I realize that there are other Police Commissioners in the Chamber who did not speak, and therefore please allow me to thank them all and their teams for the very important work they do. They have our full support.

Police officers are key players in the security architecture and the integrated approach, and they focus on other security aspects than the military does. Please allow me to focus on three important aspects of policing in United Nations peacekeeping operations: first, the need to strengthen the rule of law through policing; secondly, the role of United Nations police in preventing and addressing serious organized crime; and, thirdly, the importance of gender-responsive policing.

First, strengthening the rule of law through police reform is one of the key tasks of United Nations police in post-conflict situations. Individual police officers play a vital role in capacity-building and contributing to reforms of the judicial chain. The effective deployment of United Nations police will have a positive impact on trust, inclusiveness and sustaining peace, which strengthens the sovereignty of the host country. Therefore, United Nations police have a vital role to play during transitions and in exit strategies. United Nations police also have a connecting role between the mission and the population. They help increase trust between the mission and the population, but also among the warring parties. We see that, for example, in the role United Nations police play during the elections-related activities in big cities in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

The role of the United Nations police is essential in a people-centred approach. For that reason, the Kingdom of the Netherlands strongly believes that the Security Council should increase the relative percentage of United Nations police officers in peacekeeping operations. In order to strengthen the support of the United Nations in peace operations, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and Côte d'Ivoire want to work together with Council members to adopt a draft resolution on police, justice and corrections.

Secondly, with regard to the need to address organized crime in conflict, we often talk about the need to address the root causes of conflict. Financial gains from organized crime are a source of income that funds insurgent groups and terrorists, and thereby perpetuate the cycle of conflict. One way by which missions can address that is by developing sustainable host-State capacity to address serious crime and organized crime. For example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the illegal exploitation of natural resources directly funds armed groups. In line with the Action for Peacekeeping declaration, I would like to stress the importance of predeployment training of police officers, in accordance with the human rights due-diligence policy. The right people need to be deployed in the right place at the right time, while taking advantage of their specific police specialization.

Thirdly, I want to emphasize the importance of gender-responsive policing. Gender-responsive policing increases trust within the population, including in their national police force. To build trust, both male and female officers need to be involved in day and night patrols. Having a good mix of female and male police officers is essential to addressing sexual and gender-based violence, support victims and help to ensure that the perpetrators are held to account. That is especially relevant in South Sudan, where the deployment of more female police officers is needed to mitigate the risk of sexual and gender-based violence in and around internally displaced-persons camps.

In conclusion, United Nations police have a vital role to play in establishing long-term stability and sustaining peace in peacekeeping settings. Therefore, we look forward to receiving the Secretary-General's report on policing requested in resolution 2382 (2017), exactly a year ago today. Policing needs to be mainstreamed in the United Nations system. It is an indispensable dimension in peacekeeping missions, as well as its integrated role, together with justice and corrections, in the broader justice chain. That should be a common interest and responsibility of all. I highlight the need for the appropriate positioning of United Nations police, including the Police Adviser, so that it can be more adequately equipped to fulfil its key role in prevention and sustaining peace.

Let me express my sincere gratitude to the Secretariat for its support; the Police Commissioners for their leadership; UNMISS, MONUSCO and MINUJUSTH for their invaluable and relentless efforts in supporting the people of those countries; and all police-contributing countries for their indispensable contributions.

Mr. Temenov (Kazakhstan): We commend the Chinese presidency for convening this important briefing. We also thank Assistant Secretary-General Zouev, the Police Commissioners of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti and the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as well as Ms. Reitano, for their informative briefings. Reflections from those three field missions and Ms. Reitano on the role of the United Nations police are very important for us to move forward our collective effort to promote peace and security. On behalf of my delegation, I would like to offer the following observations and recommendations.

First, we see the world as a family of United Nations States Members that lives interconnected in a globalized world, meaning that no country can feel safe if there is strife and conflict in another country. The problems encountered by one country in the form of, for example, illegal migration, trafficking or terrorism, can have a spillover effect. Those effects are transnational and cross-border, therefore ensuring that our common security and well-being are basic pre-requisites for regional and global stability. Our actions with regard to the police component of peacekeeping therefore have to be focused on enhancing the capacities of host nations, which bear the primary responsibility for strengthening their national security, police and justice and correctional institutions, as well as holding them accountable.

Secondly, even though our efforts may be multilateral, the concept of national ownership is imperative. The priorities identified by host nations have to be given the highest consideration. Our efforts should be consistent with their cultures and legal traditions, yet non-contradictory to international norms, which would provoke greater tensions and therefore worsen the humanitarian situation.

Thirdly, restoring and maintaining peace and stability in countries that undergo conflict are long-term processes that require consolidation and cooperation among all the relevant stakeholders, such as Parliament, political and religious leaders, the private sector, academia, civil society and the media — all of which have a great impact. Community outreach and addressing issues on the ground are necessary through confidence-building measures on our part.

Fourthly, in the light of the overall United Nations reforms, and especially in peace operations, we need to develop clear mandates and directives for police contingents, with strong units for the rule of law, security sector reform, the protection of civilians and human rights and the empowerment of youth and women, especially by ending all impunity for gender-based violence. Only then will we have national stability in host countries and direct strategies to build capacity in order to prevent new conflicts, as well as relapses or recurrences of existing ones.

Fifthly, collective actions require unity of effort and close collaboration. Today's peacekeeping operations involve concurrent operations by military and police units, especially with regard to the protection

of civilians. They also call for new modalities and approaches of coordination between the police and the military in various overlapping protection situations, based on the type of violence and other community-based variables. In that regard, we would like to learn from the reflections of the briefers, especially those from the field missions, about the mechanisms and operational strategies that must be instituted between the police and military components on the various aspects of the mandates.

Sixthly, we will also need to address the broader capability and training gaps by expanding the number of police-contributing countries with high capabilities for a larger deployment of women in their forces. We believe that the capabilities of the Collective Security Treaty Organization could strengthen United Nations policing in terms of proper training and capacity-building. We also agree with the speakers who mentioned that increasing the presence of women in the United Nations police strengthens the force's ability to establish trust with local populations and also contributes to creating a safe environment for the victims of sexual violence to report crimes.

Finally, let me reiterate that Kazakhstan will work with the United Nations to achieve stability and peace and is always ready to engage in reaching higher standards and capabilities for United Nations policing, which is an integral component of peacekeeping operations.

Ms. Wronecka (Poland): I thank the presidency of the Security Council for convening this important debate. I would also like to thank all of the briefers for their very informative input on today's discussion. We value Assistant Secretary-General Alexandre Zouev's remarks regarding the strategic priorities of the United Nations police components. And we appreciate the first-hand experience provided by the Police Commissioners, including Ms. Unaisi Bolatolu-Vuniwaqa from the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), Mr. Awalé Abdounasir from the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) and Mr. Serge Therriault from the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti. I ask that they please convey our sincere words of appreciation to all policewomen and policemen who bravely perform their duties. We also welcome to the Chamber the representative of the Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime. That organization proves how civil society initiatives are significant in facilitating debate and innovative approaches as the cornerstones of building an inclusive global strategy against organized crime.

We all agree that the main role of police in peace operations is to detect crime, maintain public order and safety and protect life and property, not to mention the much-needed capacity-building for the host nation's police. All of those measures performed by police during peacekeeping operations significantly contribute to building the resilience of the host State. However, all of those objectives cannot be achieved without effective conflict analysis and early-warning and prevention efforts, especially in enhancing conflict-prevention, which saves people from needless suffering and requires an understanding of the drivers of conflict at all levels.

United Nations police, which benefit from a presence on the ground and are trained to interact with people in local communities that are sometimes very distant from the capital, should contribute to early-warning mechanisms. That can be achieved through the timely identification of elevated risks of tensions. We believe that that aspect of the police's role in the peacebuilding process should be further studied, developed and implemented on the ground. As a strong advocate of the increased role of women in peacekeeping, we would like to draw attention to the significance of their operational contribution. From the police perspective, the participation of women in peacekeeping, in particular in community policing, provides the indispensable sense of security among the local population.

The aspects of United Nations policing that I mentioned cannot be achieved without well-resourced police officers and, needless to say, United Nations police are a clear reflection of what police-contributing countries (PCCs) commit to global peace and stability. In that respect, I would like to refer directly to the role of the United Nations missions represented by our briefers. I must also highlight the efforts of MONUSCO in the implementation of a performance evaluation system that is based on objective criteria for both individual police officers and formed police units. It is worth pointing out that no performance issues have been identified so far for individual police officers, while one formed police unit needs reinforced capacity. That is of particular importance, as protecting civilians in urban areas is one of the capabilities assessed.

Another point that I would like to touch upon is the indispensable role of the police in the transition process in United Nations peacekeeping operations. The significant role of specialized police teams — which are responsible for providing support for rebuilding the capacities of the host State police — needs to be underlined. We have been following the work of the Police Division on that matter and we express our strong support for the concept. The current deployment of five specialized police teams is already a promising sign of interest among the PCCs. We encourage the Police Division to put emphasis on the further development of those units, while taking into account the experience already gained from the first stage. We consider that sharing with the PCCs the lessons learned from that process would improve and foster the implementation of the specialized police team concept, in particular to support the implementation of a targeted mandate.

The President of the Republic of Poland, in his speech during the high-level meeting on Action for Peacekeeping held on 25 September, reiterated our commitment to the UNMISS police component. That is clear and tangible confirmation that Poland is engaging in initiatives that help to restore and strengthen the rule of law.

In conclusion, let me highlight that the operational and resource limitations serve to underscore the need for a holistic approach that leverages the advantages of each component and the numerous institutional actors and agencies that are present in the mission area. The police component, as an important instrument contributing to the resolution of a crisis situation, should be considered part of a systemic approach. That would help utilize limited resources in a more effective manner by benefiting from the synergy effect.

Mr. Cohen (United States of America): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Zouev, the Police Commissioners and Ms. Reitano for their briefings.

The United States welcomes this opportunity to commend United Nations police personnel for their commitment to implementing peacekeeping mandates. United Nations police are making critical contributions to peacekeeping across the globe, and our Government is committed to strengthening United Nations police, as evidenced by our extensive capacity-building efforts to empower police-contributing countries to deploy well-led, well-trained police to a range of United Nations missions.

When the United States talks about institutionalizing a culture of performance in United Nations peacekeeping, we are not just talking about troops; we are talking about police as well. To that end, we believe that resolution 2436 (2018), which was adopted unanimously on 21 September and is aimed at enhancing the performance of peacekeepers, is a big step forward. The resolution calls for timely, transparent reporting of performance failures to the Security Council and to Member States concerned. It also calls for accountability measures for failures of performance and concrete incentives for stronger performance. Finally, it recognizes the role of data in improving performance by matching the right troops and police with the right roles. We encourage applying those considerations to peacekeeping police components and urge the Secretary-General to employ performance data to inform decision-making related to police deployments and to provide that data to donor countries that provide training and equipment in order to better channel their assistance.

We share the Secretary-General's commitment to peacekeeping performance across the board. We welcome efforts undertaken by the Secretary-General through his Action for Peacekeeping initiative, including by developing an integrated performance policy framework based on clear standards for all personnel. We urge the Secretary-General to include police more deliberately in this process.

United Nations police components often operate in complex environments and make an important contribution to the protection of civilians. We commend the work of the more than 1,350 police serving with the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). With elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo just over a month away, MONUSCO's police face the considerable challenge of preparing to provide security support for the elections.

We are also pleased to see the success of the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti in training the Haitian National Police, despite a challenging environment.

One of the key principles that has guided our efforts to make United Nations peacekeeping more effective and efficient is that peacekeeping missions must have an exit strategy. That requires building an integrated security architecture that seeks to ensure the safety of

civilians. Police have a critical role to play in making that vision a reality, as evidenced in places like Haiti and Liberia.

To that end, we support better integration of the police into all aspects of mission planning and ensuring the United Nations Police Division is empowered to properly assess, plan, deploy, manage and support peacekeeping missions. Police expertise should be consistently considered and integrated into the mandates and decision-making structures of United Nations peace operations.

Ms. Schoulgin Nyoni (Sweden): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Zouev and the Police Commissioners for their valuable briefings today. I also thank Tuesday Reitano for her important contribution and perspectives on transnational organized crime.

It is very encouraging to see so many representatives of United Nations police in the Chamber this afternoon. Although I realize that most of the Blue Berets are behind me, it is very nice anyway that they are at this meeting. I would like to take this opportunity, as some of my colleagues have already done, to thank them so much for the invaluable work that they do for all of us in their respective missions every day. They really make a crucial contribution to conflict prevention and sustaining peace, which are at the very core of the United Nations work. I thank them again. We are very proud of their accomplishments.

Imagine our societies without policing — cities, towns and villages without any objective authority to uphold the rule of law. The chaos that would reign under such circumstances is obvious. Accountable, transparent and effective policing is central to peaceful and stable societies. Strong institutions that are trusted by their citizens are crucial for responding effectively to violence and crime.

Where governance and institutions are weak, on the other hand, organized crime is more likely to take hold. Transnational organized crime finances and fuels conflict, reinforces corruption and undermines institutions. That erodes confidence in society, and criminal groups can challenge the State's ability to control its own territory.

The breakdown of law and order, the violations of human rights and the lack of the rule of law are often at the heart of the problem in the countries where the United Nations is engaged, as illustrated today by our briefers from South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Haiti. That is why Sweden has for decades been a consistent contributor to United Nations police.

Policing is an important function in all phases of conflict. From prevention to peacekeeping to peacebuilding and sustaining peace, there is always a need for structural capacity and institution-building that contributes to stability and the rule of law.

Conflict prevention is supported through direct operational actions and through supporting international norms, as well as mechanisms, to combat transnational organized crime, illicit arms flows and human trafficking. In numerous resolutions, the Security Council has included mandates or references to combating criminal flows and networks. As we heard from the Police Commissioner from the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti, to feel hope and confidence for the future, tangible investments in the rule of law is important for people in vulnerable situations. Building responsive and representative institutions is therefore key, which is also why Sweden contributes both police and corrections personnel to United Nations missions. The Global Focal Point arrangement is one useful vehicle for making a comprehensive contribution to both the rule of law and other development work.

For the United Nations to be more effective in designing adequate responses to different situations we must further strengthen the role of police in our approach, as our briefers also highlighted today. Protecting the human rights of civilians, addressing organized crime, combating sexual and gender-based violence, fighting impunity, upholding law and order and building the rule of law cannot be accomplished without effective policing.

The centrality of policing to the United Nations response should be improved through joint analyses and by taking a broad view of security. The decision-making process must be informed by relevant policing expertise, and we need adequate platforms for delivering policing advice. To make full use of United Nations policing and for the Police Division to be able to provide strategic direction on police issues to the Council, the Secretariat and other elements of the United Nations system, the Police Division must be adequately placed in the structures and the United Nations Police Adviser must have the right level to ensure access to relevant decision-making discussions.

Sweden strongly supports the Secretary-General's Action for Peacekeeping initiative and will continue to be involved in the work going forward. Ensuring an adequate reflection of the different components of peace operations will be important.

Inclusive and responsive peace operations also require a gender-balance in the cadre of peacekeepers. More than one third of the police officers Sweden today contributes to United Nations peace operations are women. It is equally important to ensure the participation of women in local outreach and projects, as also highlighted in the United Nations Mission in South Sudan briefing on gender-responsive policing. In addition, to ensure an effective policing response, it is important that all our officers be well trained and held accountable for their conduct.

We look forward to the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General on policing and to continuing the discussion on mainstreaming policing in the United Nations prevention activities and in the peace and security pillar.

Finally, United Nations police will continue to carry the dual role of providing security and protection, as well as supporting the reform, restructuring and development of rule-of-law institutions. The protection of civilians is crucially important. As the Organization is set on moving from conflict response to conflict prevention, the capacity-building role will be further highlighted.

It is high time that we act in support of increased police expertise in the United Nations decision-making processes. By making the best possible use of the different instruments that United Nations policing can provide, we will be one step closer to sustaining peace.

Mr. Clay (United Kingdom): I thank Assistant Secretary-General Zouev and the Police Commissioners present with us here today, as well as Ms. Reitano, for their briefings.

I would like to begin by asking all the Blue Berets at today's meeting to pass on to their colleagues the United Kingdom's thanks and admiration for their service and bravery. Their work and sacrifice in fragile and post-conflict States is a vital part of peacekeeping operations. In countries such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and Haiti, the men and women of United Nations policing put their lives on the line to protect the most vulnerable as their communities emerge from conflict. Their presence allows people to rebuild their lives, communities and livelihoods. They also help to embed longer-term stability by promoting the rule of law and human rights and by helping build capable and accountable national security institutions.

In the light of the important role played by United Nations policing in peacekeeping and the maintenance of international peace and security, it is vital for the Security Council to have the opportunity to hear at first-hand from Police Commissioners about what the Security Council can do to support them and their offices.

If United Nations policing is to remain effective, then we — whether Council members, police-contributing countries or police commanders — need to listen to the experiences of police on the ground and consider how reform can make a practical difference. That is why the United Kingdom was a strong supporter of resolution 2382 (2017) and the 2016 external review. We look forward to the full implementation of the resolution and those recommendations of the external review that remain outstanding. We believe that the forthcoming report on policing by the Secretary-General will provide an opportunity to take stock of the various strands of reform and set out a clear plan for the future. There are two particular areas I would like to highlight.

First, the United Kingdom would like to underline the full integration of policing advice into mission planning processes, ensuring that policing expertise is included in decision-making through the life of the mission. That needs to be underpinned by a strong and analytical capability that can undertake the continuous assessment necessary to ensure that policing activity remains appropriate to the needs on the ground.

Secondly, it is vital that United Nations missions continue to support the development of law enforcement in host States and do so based on assessment of the host State needs and capacity. The United Kingdom believes that, to maximize impact, United Nations police need to be in a position to deploy sufficient numbers of specialists in those specific disciplines that are relevant to a particular mission. The United Kingdom would like to encourage the Police Division to improve efficiency in recruitment and subsequent deployment into police components so that the relevant expertise is available when needed most.

United Nations police are present throughout the continuum of conflict. The Blue Berets are usually the first and the last members of the United Nations family that a local population meet during any intervention or response to a crisis. Therefore, in order to succeed in their mission across the duration of their deployment, officers need to establish a relationship with the population — one that must be one that is founded on trust. That trust is more readily formed if United Nations police officers reflect the diversity of the world that they are sent to protect.

Allow me, therefore, to conclude by expressing my support for police-contributing countries that are addressing the obstacles preventing more women from entering United Nations police. I also wish to encourage even greater efforts within United Nations police components to consult with communities, including women, and ensure that their views and needs are fully part of their day-to-day work and are reflected in their reporting to the Council.

Mr. Sipaco Ribala (Equatorial Guinea) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation would like to thank the briefers and acknowledge the quality of the work they carry out. In addition to the difficulties faced by the various peacekeeping missions, they must combat organized crime — in many cases financed by the illegal exploitation of natural resources — as well as ensure the safety of civilians, where the fight against sexual exploitation and other great scourges also become daily components of their task.

However, our delegation is interested in knowing whether there are any conflicts with local police with regard to competencies when it comes to investigating or designing operations? Moreover, in relation to the terrorist groups that are fuelled by the sale of narcotics and the payment of ransoms, is there no method of effective international cooperation that would allow us to cut off supplies from third countries more easily, thereby hindering the livelihoods of such groups? In addition to coordinating with a country's local police when dealing with terrorist groups, such as Boko Haram and others, we believe that there should be better coordinated cooperation with the police of the countries of the subregion in order to guarantee successful and more sustainable operations.

Ms. Guadey (Ethiopia): We express our appreciation to the Chinese presidency for organizing this briefing meeting on the activities of United Nations police forces in peacekeeping operations. We thank Assistant Secretary-General Alexandre Zouev for his briefing. We are also grateful to all the three Police Commissioners — from the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti — for sharing their field experiences, as well as Ms. Reitano for her briefing.

Ethiopia recognizes the important role that United Nations police plays in promoting stability and long-term development in countries affected by conflict. The landscape where United Nations peacekeepers are deployed today has changed dramatically. The significance of United Nations police has never been so critical, in the light of the corresponding change in conflict dynamics, the transformation in the scope and complexity of peacekeeping mandates and the evolving trend towards multidimensional peacekeeping.

United Nations policing has become a vital component of peacekeeping, particularly in carrying out mandated tasks related to supporting the capacity of host State law enforcement institutions. The role that United Nations police components play in facilitating transitions from peacekeeping to development and peacebuilding is also crucial. Past and recent experiences, such as in Liberia, among other places, are examples of the demonstrable success of United Nations police in peacebuilding and sustaining peace. In particular, United Nations policing functions in supporting host States through monitoring and restructuring local police forces, training and advising other law enforcement institutions, restoring and promoting public safety and safeguarding the rule of law have been indispensable.

We believe that national ownership should be the guiding principle for United Nations police when supporting host States in building and developing the capacity of local police forces. Host State national capacity gaps should also inform the composition of United Nations police components, particularly during planning and recruitment and in the provision of guidance and training.

Where mandated, the managing of civilian tasks that United Nations police undertake in the context of conflict and post-conflict situations, including in preventing and addressing violence against women and children, also remains vital. In that regard, the

deployment of women police officers will have a practical and positive impact in winning the trust of local communities. That is why increasing the participation of women in United Nations peacekeeping is very important. It is a source of pride to us that Ethiopia is one of the leading contributors in that regard.

Peacekeeping mandates related to police activities need to be clear and achievable. Police-contributing countries should also ensure that the forces they deploy — whether individual police officers, formed police units or specialized police teams in the field — are well-trained and equipped in order to implement their mandates. Furthermore, the Secretariat has a key role to play, including through enhancing the effectiveness of the strategic generation of police personnel with better planning, appropriate expertise, language skills and operational readiness.

Strengthening the operational and policy coherence on United Nations police within the United Nations system therefore remains very important. In that regard, we believe that the triangular cooperation among the Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries and the Secretariat in policing is key to strengthening the effectiveness of United Nations police in peacekeeping.

Ethiopia has made a very modest contribution of police personnel to United Nations peacekeeping and is exerting every possible effort to enhance its participation, including through the deployment of formed police units.

I want to conclude by reaffirming Ethiopia's commitment to enhancing its participation and contribution to United Nations Police in the years ahead.

Mr. Polyanskiy (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We thank you, Mr. President, for convening today's meeting on policing issues in United Nations peacekeeping operations and special political missions. We are grateful to Mr. Alexander Zouev, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, and the Police Commissioners of the Missions in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Haiti for their thorough and useful briefings. We would also like to take this opportunity to express our thanks to all police peacekeepers for their selfless service and conscientious execution of their duties, at times in extremely difficult circumstances.

The importance of police work in United Nations peacekeeping today is clear to us all. As one of the agents of peacekeeping work, police officers carry out major tasks. They do not just help to keep public order and support national Governments' efforts to protect civilians in the countries where they are deployed, they also play an important supporting role in reforming law-enforcement institutions and building national capacities in host States. More and more often they have to provide assistance in addressing issues such as combating organized crime, the illegal trade in narcotics, human trafficking and other security threats.

It is often the police who serve as a link between the people of host States and their Governments as well as between the people and the peacekeeping presence. When their work is successful it can strengthen citizens' confidence in State institutions and create conditions conducive to a return to normal life while establishing the preconditions for lasting peace and national reconciliation. In providing such assistance on behalf of the entire international community, the police, like all United Nations peacekeepers, must unswervingly fulfil the Security Council's mandates and uphold the Charter of the United Nations and the basic principles of peacekeeping — the consent of the parties, impartiality and refraining from the use of force except in cases of self-defence and defence of the mandate.

Establishing constructive and trust-based relations with the host country and taking their nationally determined priorities into account are extremely important components of effective mandate fulfilment. It is a condition of success in this area that the principles of national ownership and respect for national sovereignty be observed. One can hardly speak of effective international support if a United Nations mission presence of many years has merely substituted the efforts of United Nations officers for those of the local police. Nor should we forget that it is local police who have the primary responsibility for ensuring the protection of civilians.

The mandates of police components deployed in peacekeeping operations must be precise and realistic as well as taking into account country specifics and realities on the ground. The aims and scope of their deployment must also be able to be adjusted rapidly based on changes that occur in their host States. In that context we encourage constant dialogue between the Security Council, troop- and police-contributing countries and host States on every aspect of the work

of peacekeeping operations, including the planning and mandate-design stages.

It goes without saying that for police to do their jobs effectively the necessary material, technical and human resources should be in place. Missions must improve their planning and management, increase their efficiency in using the resources they have and avoid unnecessary expenditures and duplication of functions. Where those processes are concerned, it is important that the Secretariat carefully consider the opinions and recommendations of police-contributing countries.

As a police-contributing country, the Russian Federation has continued to expand its contribution to United Nations peacekeeping activities and to deploy officers with the relevant skills to missions. Since 1992 more than 500 employees of various bodies in Russia's Ministry of the Interior have become police peacekeepers, and it is important to us that United Nations representatives have frequently noted their great professionalism. We were pleased to note that following the first United Nations Chiefs of Police Summit in 2016, Russia fulfilled the commitment it had made to doubling the number of its police peacekeepers. Today Russian police officers are active in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Colombia, Kosovo, Haiti and Cyprus, and 20 per cent of them are women. The contribution of women to police work is also growing steadily in Russia itself, and in 2017, as promised, we trained a group of women officers to participate in police components of United Nations missions. Altogether, 35 women from Russia and a number of African countries participated in the course.

The Russian Interior Ministry's United Nations-certified training centre is training police peacekeepers, including foreigners, on an ongoing and professional basis. Since 2000 it has trained more than 1,600 Russian officers and 500 foreign police peacekeepers, including commanders, from more than 50 countries. Russia has unique experience in the area of peacekeeper vocational training that we are ready to share. We are also ready to deploy experts to participate in the work of specialized police groups in United Nations missions and to consider the issue of Russian police officers' participation in such groups' projects, including jointly with other countries, in anglophone missions.

Mr. Bourisly (Kuwait) (*spoke in Arabic*): I would like to thank our briefers, Mr. Alexander Zouev, Assistant Secretary-General for Rule of Law and Security Institutions, the Police Commissioners of the Missions in South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Haiti, and Ms. Reitano, of the Global Initiative against Transnational Organized Crime. Today I would like to address three topics, the protection of civilians, the rule of law and peacebuilding.

First, with respect to the protection of civilians, the work of United Nations Police is an essential pillar in the implementation of peacekeeping mandates. Most peacekeepers, including police, work in missions in order to protect civilians where there is a mandate to do so. They communicate with communities with a view to strengthening and promoting political settlements, and their work is first and foremost people-centred and designed not to undermine States' primary responsibility to protect their citizens.

Where the presence of uniformed personnel is concerned, the United Nations Police spend the longest periods of time on the ground, and their work sometimes includes deployment to special political missions. Their presence, whether as individual officers or within formed police units, makes a significant contribution to building trust among civilians and preventing relapses into conflict. In that regard, we want to emphasize the importance of adequate training for United Nations police officers, including in terms of linguistic skills, compliance with the zero-tolerance policy on sexual exploitation and abuse, the handling of cases of gender-based violence in conflict and the protection of children.

Secondly, with regard to the rule of law, the police also have a role to play in strengthening legal institutions in host countries, in security-sector reform and capacity-building of institutions for consolidating the rule of law and preserving stability, as well as in ensuring that host countries have the capacity to address the challenges that they face, including organized crime and the various rogue groups that operate outside the law. The police should help to address such challenges while ensuring respect for State sovereignty and commitment to the Security Council's mandates.

Thirdly, with regard to peacebuilding, the continued presence on the ground of United Nations Police, as opposed to other uniformed personnel, makes them responsible for ensuring a smooth transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding and for cooperating with local and international organizations and partners to implement exit strategies for peacekeeping

operations, based on successful political solutions and integrated national responsibility, in which all elements of society have a key role in ensuring lasting peace and empowering women to be peacemakers.

In conclusion, the reforms undertaken by the Secretariat, including of the peace and security pillar, will undoubtedly make police action on the ground more consistent in all peacekeeping operations, within a context of unified leadership based first and foremost on Security Council resolutions and the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. We also look forward to the forthcoming report of the Secretary-General on police activities, and we once again thank you, Mr. President, and the delegation of China for highlighting the importance of peacekeeping during your presidency of the Council.

Mrs. Gueguen (France) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this annual and always very useful meeting. I also thank Assistant Secretary-General Alexandre Zouev, who is a remarkable polyglot, the Police Commissioners here today and Ms. Reitano for their briefings, which enable us to better understand the challenges facing United Nations police forces on the ground. Like my colleagues before me, I would also like to pay a warm tribute to the men and women police officers and gendarmes, who are sometimes deployed in very difficult security conditions, for their critical work and contribution to peacekeeping and the protection of civilians.

The new challenges to peacekeeping efforts also raise questions about the role and activities of the United Nations Police in peacekeeping. In that regard, I want to fully endorse the statements by the representatives of the Netherlands and Sweden, particularly with regard to the role of the police in enforcing the rule of law and the importance of a gender approach tailored to the protection of women.

The Action for Peacekeeping reform initiative launched by the Secretary-General, which France firmly supports, must also be implemented in United Nations policing. To that end, I would like to draw the Security Council's attention to three areas. The first is improving police performance in peacekeeping operations and special political missions. Police officers must be given the means to take action at every stage of peacebuilding. Collective, proactive, long-term action is needed in order to establish the indicators for evaluating police action and improving its effectiveness in combating acts of violence or transnational crime. Training issues are key, of course. The contributing countries have to train police contingents, but they must also train the police services in the countries hosting United Nations peacekeeping operations. The people must be given the policing services they need, a condition essential to successful transitions and to ensuring peacekeeping operations' orderly departure.

The second area is encouraging the representation of women in police forces. I particularly have in mind ensuring increased numbers of women in contingents and police personnel, which is happening but needs further progress. The Secretary-General's goals are ambitious but attainable. Police forces must ensure respect for human rights and equal treatment before the law for all. They must also be able to communicate with the populations they protect. Strengthening linguistic capacities suited to deployment areas is crucial in that regard.

The third area I want to emphasize is the importance of placing the United Nations Police in a framework that matches the importance of their role. The police presence is there at every stage of peace operations, from prevention to consolidation. The police must therefore have the right skills, whether for planning, force generation, crisis management or leadership. Against that backdrop, we have high expectations of the Secretary-General's report on the police, which we called for last year through the adoption of resolution 2382 (2017). Now seems a perfect time to embrace the reforms that the Secretary-General has called for. We must set the United Nations Police ambitious targets. France intends to be a willing and constructive partner in that project.

You have encouraged us to be interactive, Mr. President, and I therefore have some questions for the Police Commissioners. My first is for Police Commissioner Therriault. The police component clearly plays a central role in the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Support of Justice in Haiti. With less than a year to go before a transition to a non-peacekeeping United Nations presence, what lessons can he draw from the Organization's efforts to strengthen the Haitian National Police, and what kind of impact will that have on the Haitian judicial system?

I also have a question for Police Commissioner Abdounasir on the French-speaking world. We know it is important for Police Commissioners to be able to

communicate effectively with the people on the ground and with host countries' national forces. Do the various relevant missions have enough French-speaking police personnel?

Finally, I have a question for Police Commissioner Bolatolu-Vuniwaqa. She spoke of the great efforts and progress made by the United Nations Mission in South Sudan in combating sexual violence in conflicts. What does she still need in order to make better progress in that regard?

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I will now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of China.

At the outset, I would like to thank Assistant Secretary-General Zouev, the three Police Commissioners and Ms. Reitano for their briefings. I also want to thank all United Nations police officers for their contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. I would particularly like to pay a heartfelt tribute to the United Nations police officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice in the cause of peace, including the Chinese police officers who lost their lives in Haiti, and to their families.

The United Nations Police is an important component of United Nations peacekeeping operations and has played an indispensable role in assisting host countries in maintaining security and stability, as well as capacity-building. Given the increasingly complex and daunting security challenges and operational environments we are seeing, we must strengthen United Nations policing. To that end, China would like to offer three recommendations.

First, the United Nations Police should uphold the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and abide by the basic principles of United Nations peacekeeping — the consent of the parties, impartiality and refraining from the use of force except in self-defence or defence of the mandate. It is vital to fully respect host countries' sovereignty and aspirations, and to heed their views and the input of police-contributing countries regarding mandate adjustment, performance assessment and day-to-day management.

Secondly, the main task should be enhancing the security capacity of host countries. The United Nations Police should support host countries through measures such as systematic training and equipment transfer in order to ensure that they are capable of safeguarding their own security and stability and of achieving sustainable peace after peacekeeping operations have withdrawn.

Thirdly, we must work constantly to improve the professionalism and capacity of the United Nations Police, who must strictly implement their selection criteria for personnel and equipment, strengthen management and performance evaluations, and improve operational efficiency so as to enhance their reputation and achieve better results. Priority must be given to the safety and security of United Nations police officers, and stronger protection measures and emergency medical response capacities are also needed. China supports Secretary-General Guterres' Action for Peacekeeping initiative and the Declaration of Shared Commitments on United Nations Peacekeeping Operations. We hope that synergy can be achieved in the implementation of the Declaration, on the one hand, and the Secretariat's peace and security architecture and management reform, on the other, with the aim of ensuring that all those endeavours contribute to improving the development of United Nations policing and United Nations peacekeeping as a whole.

China is a significant contributor of police to United Nations peacekeeping operations. Since 2000, we have contributed more than 2,600 police officers to United Nations missions. In active fulfilment of the commitments made by President Xi Jinping at the 2015 Summit on United Nations Peacekeeping, China has established and trained two standby formed police units consisting of 330 officers and has trained more than 400 peacekeeping police officers from other countries. We are in favour of organizing a new summit on United Nations policing and will continue to fulfil our commitments to United Nations peacekeeping activities and make an even greater contribution to moving United Nations policing forward.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

The members of the Council have expressed their views, in addition to asking some specific questions. I would now like to turn the floor over to the briefers to respond to the questions posed or make further comments.

I give the floor to Mr. Zouev.

Mr. Zouev: First of all, I would like to thank all members of the Council for their thoughtful comments, strategic guidance and important questions. I will address some general issues, while the three Police Commissioners will briefly address mission-specific questions.

I will start with the issue of the periodic review of the 14 recommendations, which many speakers mentioned. As we know, it is an external review. We convene periodic meetings with Police Adviser Luis Carrilho, who is here in the Chamber today, and with other senior Police Division staff, to review the recommendations' implementation. We have had some success, as well as gaps that we are trying to fill. Overall, we can see that there has been a certain amount of progress.

Secondly, there were several references to the functions, level and place of the Police Division. Here I would first like to point to resolution 2382 (2017), adopted under the Italian presidency of the Council in 2017, which calls on the Secretary-General to prepare a special report on United Nations policing before the end of 2018. We are making good progress and are in the final stages of the report's preparation. I am sure that it will be submitted for the attention of the Council and the wider membership on time. We will meet that deadline. At the same time, as we know, with regard to the functions, structure, capacity and level of the Police Division, that General Assembly resolution 72/262 C clearly called on the Secretary-General to make a special assessment on those four areas. I do not want to pre-empt the assessment's findings right now because it will be submitted at the next session of the Assembly. So there will be one report out before the end of the year, and the next will follow.

(*spoke in French*)

I would like to assure the Council that we will continue to increase the role of women in United Nations policing. We are always in need not only of more women officers but of more French-speaking women. When I meet ministers and heads of police or gendarmeries, I always raise the issue. It is not an easy issue, but we are making some progress on it and will continue to work to that end.

(*spoke in English*)

I want to assure all Council members, since the issue was raised, that the United Nations Police has always worked and will continue to work in full compliance with the mandates approved and endorsed by the Security Council in this Chamber. We also carry out our work in the field and at Headquarters with full respect for national sovereignty of host countries and in close consultations with host Governments that we organize from time to time.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to Ms. Bolatolu-Vuniwaqa.

Ms. Bolatolu-Vuniwaqa: I would like to respond to the question about what I need to do better to prevent sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence. Resolution 2406 (2018) mandates us to protect civilians and at the same time gives us an opportunity to give technical assistance and advice to the South Sudanese national police on preventing and investigating sexual and gender-based violence. What that means to us, and what we are currently working on, is that we have some limited opportunities to work on capacity-building with the national police. Going forward, we may be able to transition from providing technical assistance and advice to building the capacity of the national police to take on the task of preventing and investigating sexual and gender-based violence. In addition to that, an issue we are also looking into is ensuring a consistent supply of female officers for the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS), something that the police-contributing countries can assist us with, so that we have women there on the ground working with the local police to prevent sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence. Those are the areas we are currently exploring, as well as strengthening the specialized police teams that we are now deploying into the Mission. Going forward, they will really help us to consolidate our approach to the prevention of sexual and gender-based violence and conflict-related sexual violence.

I would also like to address the question on protecting civilians from threats of physical violence and how we can work responsibly in that regard. We appreciate the fact — and we have heard it here today — that the primary responsibility for the protection of civilians rests with the local Government that we work with on a day-to-day basis. But then again, given the fact that we are there, and given the unpredictability of the security situation on the ground, our presence can be a deterrent to threats of physical violence against the civilians whom we work with on a daily basis.

There was also a comment about how the police and military components work on the ground. In UNMISS, we have been consistently conducting progressive tabletop exercises that we do together. We have field training exercises, as well as joint planning exercises to enable us to work together on our approach to operations and so forth. We all understand the roles of the United Nations Police and the military force, and we know that they cannot replace each other, because we have very defined roles regarding the security situation on the ground. Working together on these regular exercises therefore really helps us to identify areas where we can work together to deliver a cohesive operation on the ground every day.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to Mr. Abdounasir.

Mr. Abdounasir (*spoke in French*): On behalf of our colleagues, I would like to say that we are very grateful for the recognition expressed for our efforts.

I would first like to speak about the French-speaking world and the units serving from it, particularly in the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). As has just been said, it is our desire to have more women and francophone staff members, failing which we have created mechanisms to improve the linguistic abilities of personnel on the ground and recruited language experts for the formed police units in order to communicate with the communities.

I also take this opportunity to respond to the concerns expressed by the Ambassador of the Netherlands with respect to the issue of organized crime. Much has been done but much remains to be done. I thank the Police Division for helping us to establish specialized teams on ground with all due speed. That is most important.

I conclude by addressing the concern expressed by the Ambassador of the United States with regard to the elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The size of the MONUSCO police contingent is less than 1 per cent that of the Congolese National Police. While we have many challenges ahead, that is not preventing us from preparing and drafting emergency plans in order to deploy to spots where we can be useful and make a difference.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I now give the floor to Mr. Therriault.

Mr. Therriault: I thank all members for their expressed understanding of the important role of the United Nations Police and for their respective contributions either as police-contributing countries or as donors in support of the efforts that we are effecting in the field.

(*spoke in French*)

With regard to cooperation between the Haitian National Police and the United Nations Police (UNPOL), I must reassure Council members that the United Nations Mission for Justice Support in Haiti has evolved in a framework of assistance in which UNPOL is present in the 10 departments of Haiti and co-located with the headquarters of each department. Thus, in undertaking more targeted recruiting of senior officers of each contributing country, we are able to provide support in such a way as to maximize trust and support, to the extent that we have been able to transfer our assistance to Haitian mentors who will help to develop the police to that level. This is taking place in the context of the cadre support programme.

With respect to professionalization and the transition, I can say that even before the earthquake in Haiti, the Haitian National Police were at a very high level of preparedness. After the earthquake, which did not undermine their spirit or their willingness to learn, we were able to pursue their development. Today, following the completion of two five-year development plans and the high-level review of those plans, we are confident that, in the light of the 2017-2021 development plan and the vision for the future, the Haitian National Police is ready for the transition, even though it will continue to need a certain amount of support, as do a number of police forces throughout the world that benefit from bilateral assistance and the help of other national police organizations in support of their ongoing development.

One remarkable milestone was reaching the threshold of 10 per cent women in the ranks of the Haitian National Police. With the recruitment we have undertaken for the coming promotion exercise, which should begin before the end of the year, we will reach the 11 per cent mark of women within the Haitian National Police by this time next year. We are therefore riding a rising curve, and I am confident that we will achieve the goals we have set for ourselves with respect to the integration of women in the Haitian National Police.

The most outstsanding achievement is the fact that we have developed a general inspection system for the Haitian National Police, which will ultimately help to ensure that a measure of control remains after we leave. This example of UNPOL assistance to the Haitian National Police has been taken up by the judiciary. Perhaps the best example of the influence we have had is that the judiciary is now considering a long-term development plan for the judicial system and a robust general inspection mechanism within the judiciary so as to ensure the accountability of the system and those who come before it. That, to me, is of great importance, as is the legacy we will leave to the country's transition.

To conclude, I invite the donors and the troop-contributing countries to continue to help and support the Haitian National Police as they transition to a new form of assistance that will ultimately no longer involve a United Nations peace mission.

The President (*spoke in Chinese*): I thank our briefers for their very good interactive discussions this afternoon. On behalf of the members of the Council, I wish to thank Assistant Secretary-General Zouev, the Police Commissioners and other speakers for their oustanding contributions to the work of the Council. I wish them every success as they carry out their tasks.

The meeting rose at 5.15 p.m.